



Continuing saga of marginalisation

A Dossier on Women and Tourism

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Introduction

A 12-year-old girl living in a slum of South Korea has written a poem on her mother. The poem reflects the self-realization and empowerment that every girl demands, but as the poem reflects, finds elusive.

*In summer, my mother worries about water;
In winter, she worries about coal briquettes;
And all year long, she worries about rice.
In daytime, my mother worries about living;
At night, she worries about the children;
And all day long, she worries and worries.
This is why my mothers name is "worry".
My Fathers name is "drunken frenzy",
And my name is "tears and sighs".*

We at EQUATIONS started on the Women and Tourism project from the sensational end, prostitution. It was an obvious starting point of such an enquiry. However it led us to many aspects of the gender issue in tourism. We discovered the impact on peasant women, indigenous women, and workingwomen, displaced and oppressed women, young women, and old women, women heading households, seeking a chance. In every case we found that women's lives are being planned without their participation. They have been taken advantage of, they have toiled without owning anything, they are ignored by all political regimes, they lack capital, and they are blamed for being prostitutes. They don't need sympathy. Their anger can only be assuaged by action. We have hoped that through our research into the tourism issue, we are bringing into focus the concerns raised by the women's movement in India for the past twenty-five years. We have tried to look at the issues of self-realization and empowerment by illustrating the theoretical work which has come to our attention with case studies on tourism destinations in India; within the wider region to which we belong. South Asia and further to South-East Asia, which is used as a "best practice" region for the development of tourism.

We have also attempted to see how the development model, export oriented and based on the free market system, has added to the burden of women in Asia. We have looked at NGO activists in the field as well as political parties and have become aware that tourism is not on their agenda, because it is an activity, which has boundaries flowing into so many activities that people feel tourism is a good thing, especially for unskilled and new entrants into the job market, like women and youth. Our experience shows that "market forces" have increased the atrocities on women without really giving them an opening for status, income and employment through education, health and training. Tourism is no different- In- fact it has added another dimension, sex tourism.

We have also tried to establish the structure of being a woman at the turn of the century. Women are strong on relationships-within the family, friends, at work, in the community and in society. These relationships are created through cultural, social and political realities. The self-consciousness

of women is mediated through experience, dreams and visions, in the context in which such experiences tend to create an awareness and understanding of this reality. Many stereotypes are thus internalized in this process. We have seen however that inspite of the framework of gender relations, women have reached out to others, put their strengths together and progressed only through united and collective action.

We also came to a realization of what it means to be a grass-roots woman. The words they used to describe themselves were: unemployed, low wages, subordinate, unequal, prostitutes, no choice, crushed, struggling, suffering, uneducated, not decision makers, deprived, oppressed and looked down upon. They would like to be planners, have some power, be independent, have flexibility, organize, have choices, be decision-makers, have self-respect and be empowered. Through this dialogue we believe that women need to develop at their own pace to really use their awareness.

With this dossier we hope that we will be able to engage with women's issues on a broader level, a multi-sectoral level, just as we hope that women's organizations will begin to look critically at the tourism issue and together we can develop an alternative way of doing and being. In this process we can regain dignity, equality and progress for our half of the world that holds up the sky.

EQUATIONS Team



Section One

Women and Tourism – theoretical writing

[Tourism activity is changing its face and pace from simple recreational to a big industry in our country. While its promotional aspects receive attention from an economic point of view much of its impacts on the existing social relations are ignored. Further there are very few studies in our country in understandings how tourism engages with women, apart from the general notion that it is usually linked to prostitution.

The need to understand the linkages of tourism and women from a gendered perspective should be seen from the fact that all development in general originates from a male oriented system. Also the effect of these development come into play in a gendered social system.

Hence, when we try to peep into the realities of tourism development, we find that the process and activities of development are nothing but a reflection of the form of relationships that prevails in society. The relationship between man and woman, the division of labour among them, the role as defined by the society determines tourism activities.

At the same time, the State mechanism too contributes in maintaining the gendered framework within society for its easy functioning, the development plans and policies being completely gender insensitive. Considering the promises made in tourism policies that tourism development shall generate employment opportunities and upliftment of women, needs in-depth researches. Even before entering into such ventures an understanding of the functioning of the existing social systems is needed.

The following chapter tries to illustrate the framework in which the social system operate, the dichotomy in tourism development and activities, the way it operates in depth]

Understanding tourism processes: A gender-aware framework

A gender-aware framework for the analysis of tourism development processes and tourism related activity is offered. The paper focuses on three crucial issues in the pursuit of such a framework. It is argued that. (1) tourism development processes and tourism-related activities are constructed out of gendered societies; (2) gender relations both inform, and are informed by the practices of all societies, and (3) power relations surrounding tourism development processes represent an extension of the politics of gender relations. It is concluded that an analysis of tourism-related activity can be enhanced by focusing on the dynamics of gender relations.

The profound social implications of tourism development require an analytical framework which addresses social differentiation. Tourism involves processes which are constructed out of complex and varied social realities and relations that are often hierarchical and usually unequal. Gender relations are one element of this complex. Whether we examine divisions of labour, the social construction of landscape (both natural and human influenced), how societies construct the cultural 'other', or the realities of the experiences of tourist and host, it is possible to examine issues of relationships, differences and inequalities resulting from tourism-related processes in terms of



gender relations. This allows us to concentrate on women's and men's differential experiences, constructions and consumption of tourism. It also permits us to formulate an analytical framework focusing on the ways in which: (1) tourism-related activity expresses gender relations, and (2) gender relations inform and articulate different forms of tourism activity.

The aim of this paper is to provide a gender-aware framework through which the various processes of tourism development and tourism related activity can be analysed. It is argued that, (1) tourism related activities and the processes involved in tourism development are constructed out of gendered societies; (2) gender relations both inform, and are informed by the practices of all societies; and (3) tourism's identification as an industry based on the economic, political or social power relations between nations or groups of people represents an extension of the politics of gender relations. We argue, therefore, that an analysis of tourism-related activity can be enhanced by focusing on the dynamics of gender relations in both host and guest societies.

A gendered framework

Recognition of the centrality of gender as an organizing framework for conceptual analysis is a relatively recent phenomenon viewed as 'a principle organizing social arrangements, behaviour, and even cognition', gender is essentially structural and relational, and needs to be positioned within analyses which address systemic change over time.

This paper focuses on the principal conceptual issues which we consider to be crucial in establishing a gendered framework within which to better understand tourism development processes and the implications of tourism related activity. Selected literature is employed to exemplify each element of this framework. We readily acknowledge that the examples used here are not exhaustive nor are they exclusive to each contention. The ideas presented and literature reviewed point to specific issues and concerns relevant to the discussion of the economic social, cultural and environmental impacts of tourism-related activity, all of which can be examined using a gender-aware analysis.

1. The activities and processes involved in tourism development are constructed out of gendered societies. Consequently the masculine and feminine identities articulated by both host and guest societies are important components of the types of tourism taking place.

We can begin to unravel the complexities of this statement by focusing attention on the gendered nature of tourism employment. Men and women tend to be segregated horizontally into different occupations, although the degree of segregation depends on the nature of the work: the greatest degree of segregation is found among the semi skilled, domestic and servicing type occupations, many mirroring functions carried out in the home. Women thus tend to remain concentrated in occupations which are predominantly female. Walby has argued that an understanding of the origins of gender segregation, and its maintenance at work, is the key to explaining women's subordinate position in the workforce.

Conventional explanations have implied that if the best jobs and highest rewards are linked to an accumulation of human capital, women are inevitably disadvantaged because their process of accumulation is interrupted by, marriage, birth and childbearing." The position of women who



continue to work- without such breaks and yet who remain in low-status, low-paid occupations is not explained by such conventional, approaches. However, even where there is evidence of men and women starting with equal skills, qualifications or experience, the distribution of higher status and higher paid grades remain uneven. Cultural theories suggest that women make a rational choice about the type of work they pursue and that their choice derives from an adherence to values associated with femininity and domesticity. Such a position clearly fails to address the underlying causes determining women's choices.

Our understanding of the implications and structural consequences of employment in tourism related activity needs to be based on thoroughgoing critique of (1) the variations of quality and type of work activities available, (2) the differential access of men and women to such opportunities, (3) the seasonality of employment, and (4) the existing and new gender divisions of labour generated.

Recent studies have shown that in a number of regions where tourism-related activity is pursued as a stimulus to economic development - employment opportunities for the local population are typified by a predominance of unskilled, low-paid jobs such as kitchen staff, chambermaids 'entertainers' and retail clerks. As in most forms of employment, these categories of tourism work reinforce and transform gender divisions of labour with profound implications for women's potential income attainment, job security, work satisfaction, access to resources, social mobility and socioeconomic status.

A gender focus within the hotel and catering industry, in Britain, for example, depicts gender stereotyping and sex segregation at different levels of activity: women which, is deemed to represent (an extension of) their traditional domestic responsibilities for which they will be inherently skilled. Although men are often employed as porters and stewards, they are over-represented in professional managerial and supervisory positions. Despite the potential improvements in economic status that women may attain as a consequence of involvement in tourism-related employment, strong cultural barriers, poor availability of government initiative, and the lack of organization among the women workers themselves constrain them from aspiring to political and communal leadership roles. Armstrong's research in highland Scotland, for example, found that although women were the main tourism workers, traditional male leadership and networking systems did not acknowledge leaders of established women's organizations as legitimate political figures. As a consequence, women had little influence beyond their own village.

In hotels in Barbados, most women employed were in less stable, lower status work, such as housekeeping, reception and other service occupations with the lowest job security (partly because of lack of unionized women workers) and income levels. In Sri Lanka, even women who owned and managed their own guesthouse or restaurant did not gain increased status, because of the low value ascribed, to women's work. In a number of developing countries, however, where the transformation from agriculture to manufacturing and service industry employment is often viewed positively, lack of equal employment opportunities between women and men is rarely, expressed.

Early advocates of tourism as a strategy for development, viewed tourism employment a positive of integrating underprivileged sub-groups of society into the mainstream economy. Such notions



however, may be seen as echoing stereotyped racist and sexist social ideologies and re-enforcing existing social stratification systems. They also create overt ethnic and gender divisions of labour within the tourism industry. Research on women and tourism in Bali and Western Samoa for example, has emphasized that women's roles in economic production cannot be understood without reference to the cultural context of women's structural position in society and the home, which may be advantaged or disadvantaged by such roles.

Lever's study, of Spanish migrant workers showed that much seasonal, unskilled. Low income and insecure tourism employment is undertaken by rural women who migrate as a result of poor rural employment opportunities. The exploitation of what is deemed women's work is again expressed: women are seen as 'cheaper' than men because, for example, they sweep and tidy, at the end of the day and perform other tasks which men refuse to do. While tourism migration may bring temporary improvement for individual migrants, it acts to postpone the need to address long-term rural development questions, not least employment provision for women.

In specific tourism-dependent regions of Britain and Ireland, economies are gendered in their inclusion of women in the tourism-related labour force. Issues of employment opportunities, in both historical and contemporary contexts, ghettoize women in work in a way which is seen to be an extension of domestic activity especially in relation to their involvement in the provision of bed-and-breakfast accommodation. Utilizing tourism as a strategy for development (and the gender division of labour it reinforces) creates a situation in which women, otherwise marginalised in the workforce, are very much part of the prevailing capital and patriarchal social and economic structures. However, changing gender relations may be evident as women particularly, move their traditional domestic labour into the public domain. Women earn publicly and gain an element of financial autonomy through work that does not appear to threaten existing gender roles and can be accommodated within the prevailing sexual division of labour.

The gendered nature of tourists, the tourist experience and the tourist's structural role is but poorly researched and understood. Although studies addressing women's leisure have appeared since the 1970's, until recently they have tended to lack a gendered central organizing focus failing to evaluate leisure roles in relation to gender differences and inequalities within society. Two key issues appear to be crucial in such a debate, however: (a) women's experiences of time tend to be much more fragmented than those of many men, (b) women tend to be the facilitators of others (particularly husband's, children's, and parent's) leisure, and only secondarily the recipients of leisure themselves. Little research has focused specifically on distinguishing between the motivations of male and female tourists, and on the extent to which women organise/control their own and/or their family's leisure and tourism experiences in terms of timing, length, destination, accommodation, transport and actual leisure activities.

Recognition of the gendered nature of the motivation acts and aspirations of travelling, however, has seen lately a proliferation both of anthologies of women travellers and of guides aimed at women who travel. Assessing the motivations of women travellers over a period of more than 200 years, Russell discerned a wide range of triggering factors, including the need to: (a) escape from domesticity or a routine job; (b) overcome a loss of emotional ties; (c) experience the thrill of danger; (d) demonstrate women's abilities, and (e) undertake scientific discovery. Certainly, changes in personal circumstance, whether a broken romance or marriage, death of a close relative



or sudden inheritance, have often appeared to provide the releasing mechanism for women to embark on concerted travelling. In a study of young, educated, long term budget travellers, Riley found that women more than men said they wanted to travel to establish independence from their families and to feel comfortable with doing things alone.

Gendered patterns of travel and tourist wants are of direct interest to the tourist industry in that specific types of accommodation transport and activities could be developed to meet them. However, while some critics of mass, large-scale tourism development have advocated the pursuit of small scale, 'sustainable', 'alternative', 'responsible' or appropriate' tourism which is locally controlled, sensitive to indigenous cultural and environmental characteristics and directly involves and benefits the local population, gender considerations have yet to be placed centrally within such a debate.

In summary, access to tourism-related employment is overtly gender-based. There is evidence from the literature to suggest that the majority of menial jobs, especially those of low skill, wage and security are occupied by women. However, it is important to emphasize that the prevailing social and cultural norms regarding 'women's work' have underpinned this process and have permitted it to take place. It seems that stereotyped perceptions of women's roles permeate transnational tourism organizations and diverse cultures and serve well the economic and political agendas of the transnational tourism industry.

2. Gender relations both inform, and are informed by the practices of all societies. Therefore, economic, social cultural, political, and environmental aspects of tourism related activity interact with the gendered nature of individual societies and the way in which gender relations are defined and redefined over time.

The tourism literature has generated considerable debate over the social and cultural impacts of tourism-related activity. We can elaborate on a number of these issues to illustrate the overt way in which tourism arises out of the social and cultural interaction between host and guest societies, and the ways in which these activities are gendered.

As a process for development, tourism provides a strategy for economic and social change that has been widely debated within the framework of modernization. At the same time, however, the tourist's quest for the unique creates a demand for the traditional cultural 'other'. Discussions of tourism's relationship with authenticity, commoditization and the changing nature of the meaning of cultural arts is well documented. Yet, more recent comments suggest that an analysis of the impacts of commoditization on those involved in the production of ethnic art depicts an understanding of how issues of gender, class and ethnicity, intertwine. Swain's analysis of the development of ethnic tourism among the Sani of China provides such an example. The government of China promotes ethnic tourism using exotic images of Sani women wearing traditional dress. In this instance, however, the commoditization of culture and tradition goes beyond the state-promoted image. Many Sani women are involved in the production of ethnic handicrafts and the marketing of them in nearby towns and cities. Sani men are employed in providing tourism services and support women's home craft production.

The ways in which individual societies deal with the commercialization of their culture may be profoundly gendered, and women and men play different roles in the selling of their traditions.



Whether we focus on the Kuna in Panama, the Sani in China's traditional dance in Bali, quilt making in Amish Pennsylvania, the production of tapa in Western Samoa, or the masculinization of heritage tourism in Stirling, Scotland, gender relations and roles are an important element of authenticity and tradition, and change in response to the demands of tourism development processes.

Another way in which to see or recognise tourism's interrelationship with social practices is through analyses of the family. Changing gender relations are expressed through the way in which tourism interacts with families and changing family structure. For example, family situations and household status which often determine women's access to employment opportunities. The demonstration effects of tourism development for the institution of the family vary according to geographical context. In the Caribbean, for example, Antrobus argues that a gender-aware focus within analyses of tourism development processes reminds us that women's interaction with tourism has a more profound impact on the family than does that of men, because of women's position within the family. In Crete, Kousis found that thanks to mass tourism, change in rural family structure reflected more widespread control of decision making among family members and the possibility, of increased autonomy for women. However determinant the economic rather than cultural factors induced change she suggested that profound, gendered practices such as the importance of marital arrangements, and the dowry system had lost little of their significance. Further, the development of relationships between local men and female tourists required a revision of local moral codes, which, only applying to male Cretans, thereby widened the gap of behavioral 'norms' between local men and local women.

In Mexico, Chant found incidences of female headed households more dominant in areas of readily available tourism employment. Here, women found economic autonomy, and the ability, to better control their own family environment. We urgently require systematic analyses of such potential interactions between factors of change, the local sociocultural context and family relations in which gender is centrally positioned.

Appreciation of the environment is socially constructed both temporally and spatially, and one way in which we 'see' the environment is based on the changing economic, social and geographical organization of leisure and tourism. However, while issues relating to the gendered nature of the construction of environmental values are well recognized, the ways in which they relate to processes of tourism development have yet to appear in the literature. Research which deconstructs environmental values through gender, class and race differences would provide a valuable contribution to an understanding of the significance and roles of the environment within tourism development processes.

Many of the social and economic processes noted are a result of the movement of large numbers of people from one place to another, carrying with them different sets of motivations, preconceptions and desires to 'find something new'. Host/guest relations involve at least some exchange of social and economic values. The extent to which these exchanges take place and their degree of symmetry depends on the nature and context of interaction between host and guest, not least in terms of the underlying ideology of the host regime and its structuring of the tourism industry, relative levels of social and economic development of host and guest societies,



type of tourist, and form of tourist-related activity. Unless tourism is managed in a comprehensively 'prescribed' manner, some form of interaction will always take place, and the ways in which resulting changes in social and economic value systems are gendered is significant.

The issues raised under the first two points are reinforced through our third contention.

3. Discussions of gender and gender relations are concerned with issues of power and control. Gender relations are political relations at the household, community and societal levels. Identifying tourism as an industry based on the economic, political or social power relations between nations or groups of people represents an extension of the politics of gender relations. As such, tourism revolves around social interaction and social articulations of motivations, desires, traditions and perceptions, all of which are gendered.

International processes of tourism development have been perceived by, some as part of global economic and political power relations inevitably involving some degree of power and control by, one group over another. Indeed, tourism is often seen as a mechanism for the incorporation of developing countries into an essentially exploitative global economic system, or is linked to the colonialism and political economy of North-South relations. Such discussions provide insight into the explanation of concepts of international economic and political power relations within international tourism. However, power relations also exist within national tourism and are focused much more acutely at the local level within issues of race, class, and gender.

We can elaborate on this issue using the following two subthemes. First, in any society, gender relations are constructed out of the varied social realities involved in the complex network of social interaction and control. If we accept that the tourism industry and tourism-related activity involve articulations of power and control, then we must be able to rethink our analyses of tourism-related impacts at the local level and look for ways in which societal differences embody the (re)presentation of the politics of gender relations.

The ways in which dominant (power) structures dictate tourism policy can be reflected in the way in which tourism is presented in different places. Edensor and Kothari have highlighted the promotion of tourism through an appreciation of Scottish heritage and nationalistic pride which is configured exclusively by one - in this case white, heterosexual male - set of values, emphasizing battle and a warrior ethic. By contrast, in Western Samoa, Fairbairn-Dunlop argues that while, as elsewhere, tourism has tended to commoditize traditional beliefs and practices, women possess well defined rights and resources derived from those very traditions, which have permitted them skillfully to identify and exploit opportunities to dominate the tourism industry, from a position of strength. Here, for both women and men, a widespread fear is that tourism's global power structures will undermine traditional Samoan customs, and with them the complementary, gender-influenced organization of Samoan tourism and values of hospitality.

Swain's research on the Kuna of Panama and the Sani of Yunnan, China, not only exemplifies the control of tourism policy by dominant power structures, but also depicts the ways in which those structures interact with, and reinforce broader (western) economic and political agendas within the tourism industry. She concludes that although women in both societies have derived some measure of economic independence and empowerment, from their participation in tourism



development they remain 'exoticized female images of the other, with little real power in their distinct state societies'. In the case of the Kuna of Panama, women produce *mola* artwork, a traditional fabric handicraft and although they sell it in local markets men control the commodity's wholesaling in urban centres and generally define the political and economic forums and structures through which the community interacts with tourists.

This is not to say, that processes involved in tourism-related activity, always reinforce gender differences and inequalities. All processes of development and societal change are, however, constructed out of different social relations which inevitably embodies power, inequality and control and are dynamic in their use of gender relations. What, therefore, does tourism development mean for women and men in different societies?

Second, the relationships, consequences and eventual configuration of the tourism experience for hosts and guests is gender specific. The differential effects of tourism as a strategy for development are evident in our conceptualization and analyses of the implication of tourism-related activity. In addition, the way in which all societies, whether host or guest, embody a changing set of gender perceptions, stereotypes and relations, and articulate these as part of their individual understanding of 'reality', has implications for the marketing of tourism: for the motivation of guests to visit and for hosts to entertain. For example, the advent of sex-tourism, which has been widely discussed within the sociocultural impact literature, is overtly concerned with female/male (or male/male) host/guest encounters.

This form of tourism-related activity, has flourished in societies which have a particular set of gender/power relations. These relations are often steeped in historical traditions which interact with the modernization and globalization of local and national economies and societies. Female prostitution in developing countries signifies the continuous interplay between the new international division of labour and the manipulation of the sexual division of labour. The popularity of organized sex package tours in Southeast Asia, especially among Japanese male tourists has been viewed as representing an economic power relation reflecting a long history of class, gender and race relations within the region. According to Kikue, South Korea's notoriety as a destination for Japanese sex-tourists is partially due to Japan's former colonization of the Korean peninsula and the racist overtones this implies. The phenomenon in developing societies of male hosts interdicting with female tourists is as yet poorly researched.

The ideological constructs of the advertising industry constructing and diffusing fantasy, meaning and identity - infuse the tourism industry, not least the representation of women. Images of First World women tourists and Third World women tourism hosts are frequently compared and contrasted: the latter as submissive, for the benefit of male tourists, the former, potent, yet independent.

In summary, the way in which gender roles and relations are represented in the process of tourism development is an aspect of political power sharing which is readily seen at the local level. The differential experiences of women and men, and their social interaction with others as either hosts or guests, is dependent upon the particular construction of gender relations in any society and how they change over time. Examples of women's role and position in tourism-related employment



(including the sex tourism industry), in representing culture and tradition, and in their motivations for engaging in tourism-related activity (as either hosts or guests) attest to this claim. The involvement of women in new tourism enterprises in Ireland, for example, is accepted in a society where, historically, women's work has been intensely controlled. The view of a woman as wife, mother and the carer for others has remained dominant in Irish society. Consequently, the extension of this role into providing lodgings for tourists is acceptable and does not challenge the prevailing notions of gender roles and relations.

Conclusion

Unless we understand the gendered complexities of tourism, and the power relations they involve, then we fail to recognize the reinforcement and construction of new power relations that are emerging out of tourism processes. From the values and activities of the transnational tourist operator to the differential experiences of individuals participating as either hosts or guests, all parts of the tourism experience are influenced by our collective understanding of the social construction of gender.

Tourism-related activity is one of a number of projects of (re)presentation which are undertaken through the perceptions and motivations of the tourist in relation to the nature and articulation of the tourism product as defined by the host in conjunction with a variety of marketing agents. Therefore, tourism development and the generation of various forms of tourism-related activity in a particular place is a two-way process which is dependent upon the social relations present in both host and guest societies. Attention to these social relations is required in order that we may reveal the ways in which they are used and change over time as a result of tourism development.

The tourism literature reveals case studies which highlight the ways in which societal constructs and practices cut across conventional categories of tourism analysis. Consequently, it is difficult to look at the economic impacts of tourism without an integrated discussion of their social and political implications. Similarly, an analysis of the social and cultural changes inherent in the processes of tourism development requires an understanding of different social and cultural practices within particular societies, the ways in which these practices interact with others as either hosts or guests, and the reconstructed and reconstituted social relations that emerge from the process.

The social implications of processes of tourism-related activity and development demand an analytical framework which addresses differences within societies. A gender-aware framework moves us towards this goal and suggests an agenda for further debate.

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Vivian Kinnaird, Derek Hall

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Exploring the political role of gender in tourism research

Gender and tourism have something in common when it comes to political analysis: neither was taken seriously by political scientists as important subjects of political inquiry until relatively recently. Recognition of variations in political behavior among men and women became a subject of research only after the Second World War and public policy studies of either tourism or gender issues are less than twenty years old in the United States.

Gender studies have developed a rich literature in that time. Tourism, while gradually attracting more attention by social scientists, continues to lack sustained political study. In most cases, researchers stumble onto tourism inadvertently when they are exploring something else. Surprisingly, it was the Christian Church in Asia that perhaps earlier than any other institution recognized the political importance of tourism.

Today, however, in the church and, within several other forums linkages are also being made between *gender and tourism*. Church and peace and justice groups are looking at the issue of international tourism's impact on the exploitation of women and children, or labor, education and development issues. In each issue gender differences exist. *Annals of Tourism Research*, a referred social science journal, is devoting a special issue to the relationships between gender and tourism. Even in women's studies and international relations texts, new connections are being made between gender and tourism. One of the best such analyses is Cynthia Enloe's *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases* (1989). It explores not only the gender differences in opportunity structure, but the substantial evolution of travel and tourism roles.

What this chapter will do is suggest areas of tourism research in which there are politically important gender issues and speculate about how trends in tourism and political organizations may affect the gender distinctions that have emerged. But first some definitional clarification is appropriate.

There are dozens of ways to define the study of politics, but one both pithy and pertinent is that of American political scientist Harold Lasswell. He said politics is 'who gets what, when and how' (Lasswell, 1936). Knowing if and how tourism differently affects men and women would seem the very essence of studying the politics of gender and tourism.

But if tourism is like almost every other policy issue to which a gender analysis has been applied, the sexes do not begin with a level playing field. Thus, to Lasswell's definition, it would be prudent to add Michael Parenti's addition 'and who already has what' (Parenti, 1977). This writer would add 'and who cares' (Richter, 1991 a). The factual discussion of the topic can take us only so far; attention also needs to be given to the *perceptions, intensity and salience* of the issue to individuals and groups of varying resources and commitments.

The political relationship of gender to tourism is not static but rapidly evolving. The elite-driven policy sector is increasingly opening up to more claimants for influence - in gender terms that process has meant increased access to and impact on women. That represents a marked departure from the historical gender differences vis-a-vis tourism.



Gender differences in tourism: a historical perspective

'Until the sixteenth century to be a woman, travel, and remain respectable one had to be generally either a queen or a pilgrim' (Robinson, 1990). Travel has had a different *contextual* meaning for men than for women until very recent times. Travel meant conquest, wars, crusades, exploration, trading opportunities, hunting, trapping, fishing, commerce. Overwhelmingly, that was the public sphere of men in contrast to the global tendency to assign the private sphere of home and family to women. To the extent women participated, they did so as a vital support system for missionary work, immigration, imperial adventures, diplomatic support, or 'civilizing the frontier'.

By the nineteenth century, travel had come to be seen as a value in its own right. The Grand Tour of Europe was the capstone to an affluent young man's education. Travel was a scarce resource eagerly sought which enhanced a young man's economic and political prospects even as it broadened his tastes. It augmented a man's prestige but it diminished a woman's reputation.

For women, education generally was seen as having much less utility and was characteristically confined to music and the domestic arts. Travel was irrelevant unless it functioned to support family goals or was justified for religious pilgrimage or health considerations. Unchaperoned travel of single women until the mid-twentieth century compromised marriage prospects and -was not seen as a positive reflection on the woman's intellect and sophistication, but as betraying a certain lack of modesty and propriety. In Western societies, women were seen as requiring the protection of men from the dangers posed by other men, particularly, when venturing beyond family and friends.

In general, in Asian and Middle Eastern societies, the assumptions were quite different though the solutions similar. Women were considered sufficiently lusty and unreliable that family honour required their early marriage and sustained surveillance. In China, the practice of footbinding assured that affluent women would contribute to their husband's status by their absolute inability to labour, let alone travel except by palanquin! By being economically useless and dependent, they demonstrated their husbands' ability to afford such idleness.

Thomas Cook launched his famous travel-based empire in Europe intent on providing reliable, proper escorted tours for curious women eager to transcend home and hearth - albeit respectably. It would be another hundred years before the travel industry began to cope with the needs of female *business* travelers! This was true into the twentieth century.

There were always female mavericks who traveled with gusto with and without spouses and entourages. Their exploits are only beginning to be rediscovered. Most press accounts of the day viewed them with disdain as 'globe trotteresses' and dismissed their considerable insights as irrelevant. It was not until 1892 that the Royal Geographic Society admitted women. In the United States it would be over thirty more years before women were allowed in The Explorers Club. Women by that time had set up their own Society of Women Geographers (Tinling, 1989)! But for most women of means, travel adventures were not on the horizon.

Women's accounts of their travels have differed markedly from men. Women have had greater access to the women and children in other societies than have men, and their accounts, as a



consequence, offer more of a sense of family customs. Men, as might be expected, were more apt to comment on political affairs, the impact of European ideas and the state of technology (Tinling, 1989).

Not just travel, but even at home the very notion of leisure time was one enjoyed by men long before women. The weekend, for example, meant far less of a change in activity for women than for men. As Rybczynski notes in *Waiting for the Weekend*: 'The proper place for proper women was the home - public leisure was exclusively a male domain' (Rybczynski, 1991).

Gender differences in employment and ownership

Men and women not only have historically been socialized to view travel from very different perspectives, but there continues to be a division of labour by gender at all levels of the travel and tourism hierarchies.

Let's consider 'who already has what'. United Nations' statistics tell us that though women do two-thirds of the world's work, they get one tenth of the world's income and have one-hundredth of the world's property (Johnson, 1983). Comparable statistics focused on the travel and tourism industry do not exist, but inequality appears none the less to be the norm in most sectors.

The tourism sector taken as a whole (and its boundaries are still open to dispute) is small-scale. In the United States, for example, over 95 per cent of tourism-related businesses are quite small. Women dominate travel agency ownership and are a majority of travel agents (Richter, 1991b). In monetary terms, however; men control the major sectors of the tourism economy. There are few if any women owners of airlines, railroads, major destinations (except Dolly Parton's Dolly World), hotel chains (inmate Leona Helmsley's empire is an exception), car rental companies and travel magazines. Even female travel writers are scarce - Jan Morris being a notable exception and having established her reputation first as a male.

Nationalists in developing countries bemoan the perils of tourism turning their country into a nation of waiters and bellhops because of foreign control (itself largely male-controlled) (T. Barry et al., 1984; English, 1986). The real bottom of the hierarchy, however, are the chambermaids, restaurant help and laundresses. They get few tips and have the least dignified positions (Enloe, 1989). Female cooks and waitresses tend to be found in the lowest paid parts of the food sector, while cooking is historically a female task in most societies, it becomes an overwhelmingly male niche in the fancier restaurants where salaries and tips are substantial.

So while women do have *access and employment* disproportionately to men in the travel sector, these positions tend to be available - as indeed, they are to minorities - because they are seasonal, part-time or minimum wage. This relates to the fact that they also are in the least organized sectors of the travel labour market.

In summary, the answer to 'who already has what' is that women have the majority of the jobs at the base of the tourism employment hierarchy; men have almost all of the jobs at the middle and top.



Prostitution

One employment sector, prostitution, once almost exclusively female has become unenviably open to men and boys. While most countries have prostitution legal or not - certain destinations have become inextricably linked with sex tourism, such as Thailand (nicknamed 'Thighland' in some circles), the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Brazil. (K. Barry et al., 1984; Holden and Horleman, 1983; Richter, 1989a; Sereewat, 1983; Thanh-Dam, 1983). The numbers are boggling, the social spillover daunting in disease, crime and neglected children. While the prostitutes remain overwhelmingly female, a growing gay market and pedophilia market exploit men and young boys (ECPAT, 1992). In any case, the *customers* are almost exclusively male. Females buying the 'escort plus' services of black males in the Caribbean are not unknown, but the sex tourism industry revolves around the fantasies of men and is owned and controlled by men. Women work for men, not vice versa, when it comes to the provision of sexual services.

Many things combine to link sexual activity with tourism. By its minimum definition, a tourist is someone staying overnight at least 100 miles from home. The anonymity of being away from friends, business associates and relatives offers opportunity for discreet extramarital sexual liaisons without the emotional, long-term commitment of an affair. It combines a sense of kinky adventure with intimacy in a strange location.

Explaining sex tourism?

Two interesting arguments are advanced by those more sanguine about sex tourism than is the present writer. Both place the responsibility not on the men but the morals and attitudes of women. One line of reasoning is that prostitution is the world's oldest profession, and that in many of the travel markets where it is most explicit, concubinage has been its national equivalent for centuries.

This argument does not face the very different conditions associated with prostitution in a touristic context. Regularly patronizing a prostitute or supporting a concubine were much less dangerous for the men and women involved, than the transient and fleeting associations now taking place. The legalization and institutionalization of prostitution in such places as Australia and Las Vegas, have in fact been a response to the robberies, murders, drug-dealing and health problems associated with unregulated prostitution. (It is also a way to tax a lucrative industry and get kickbacks from the licensing of prostitutes.)

The second argument is even more ingenious. It blames sex tourism on the women's movement! Instead of women staying in their place, they demand equality. Instead of 'free sex', as they unshackle their inhibitions they have become more picky about the men with whom they will mate! Imagine, the women's movement did not define itself the way, some men wanted. Pro-choice was extended not only to abortion but to coupling! This argument was actually made in a supposedly serious research paper this writer reviewed. It purported to explain why Australian males went on sex trips to Thailand. Supposedly, they needed to do some male bonding and be with some feminine women after contending with increasingly uppity Australian women, corrupted by the women's movement!



Not only is it insulting to suggest such fragile egos in Australian men but it is a curious argument to suggest that a bid for equality among Australian women *naturally* will result in the exploitation of other women! Nor does it appear to be a sufficient explanation for sex tourism from Japan where the women's movement is almost microscopic, or pedophilia tours from Germany where presumably the children are no more aggressive than anywhere else!

So who cares? Increasingly, groups are organizing against sex tours, the exploitation of children, and the health and safety issues attached to each. One of the most active of these groups is End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism (ECPAT), which is moving on child prostitution issues in scores of countries. They have already had some success.

Realistically, they have their best chance of success in terms of controlling child prostitution, through stiff fines and sentences for *the customers and parents* of such abused children. The global network against such exploitation offers some support to governments long on good intentions but short on will. AIDS may be a more effective antidote to misplaced ardor than government action, but advertising, family fares and destination development that sells non-sexual activities are all options that more and more groups may sponsor.

Gender differences in marketing, souvenirs and attractions

Gender and marketing

Theoretically, the appeal of combining sex with tourism should be the same for both sexes, but it is not. Whether we ascribe the differences to biological propensities, socialization or opportunity structure, an industry providing a sexual ambience and sexual favours to male clients creates a potentially hostile environment for female clients. Yet, because males control the industry and particularly its marketing and promotion, the expectations of linking sex with tourism are everywhere. Handsome, flirtatious men are not what the ads offer. It is women, alone or with other women, and often in remote natural settings or in a serving role, as in hotel and airline ads. Intact families, older people and children are not pictured in most advertisements.

In fact, advertising encouraging whole families to travel is the exception, though industry analysts predict more of this as ageing baby boomers bring children along on vacations, e.g. children's versions of Club Med or cruise activities. In general, men who bring their wives on business trips are sold romantic; second honeymoon experiences. Women, on the other hand, are promised physically pampering environments with excellent shopping! The older woman traveler has been virtually ignored in the marketing research though evidence suggests she may be a much more active and economically important element than anticipated (Hawes, 1988). This is not surprising. The industry generally has been both myopic and sexist in its assumptions about what women need and want, despite the fact that women make the majority of the decisions regarding discretionary travel (Smith, 1979; Tunstall, 1989).

As women have increasingly become more of the travel market, the industry response has adapted in some curious ways consistent with male orientation and female concerns. The general advertising has become a bit more subtle. Prostitution services have become less small-scale, more entrepreneurial. Visa and Master card are accepted for a dazzling array of itemized sexual services



from virtually any racial and ethnic group one desires. Presumably routinizing such services will encourage less hassling of women in general, and women travelling alone in particular. It will also encourage men to patronize services *controlled* by other men. In the age of AIDS and herpes, men get some assurances that the women they buy will be inspected and presumed healthy. The women, of course, get no such protection from their clients!

Women business travellers, then, are just as likely to be interacting professionally with men who are buying the sexual favors of other women. What the male-controlled industry offers is the better protection of their female business travellers. Thus, there is greater attention to security in the issuance of keys, better locks, and more attentive service in restaurants. Hair dryers, skirt hangers and bubble baths are also more likely to be included in hotels, be it for clients or their female guests. That women still feel vulnerable is suggested by their much greater use of room service for meals.

Gender and souvenirs

Another area where gender differences emerge with respect to tourism is in the selling of memories through postcards and souvenirs. Semiotics has demonstrated that those in control show us an image of 'the other, that is congruent with the dominant group values, their expectations and their goals. For example, we can now look back with some amusement, tinged with horror, at the way early travel writings described non - Western societies. The more lurid the tales from Asia, Africa and the American frontier of cannibals, sacrifices, savages and bare-breasted maidens, the easier it was to rationalize imperial 'civilizing' adventures".

The United States was not immune. President McKinley reportedly declared in 1898 that he was annexing the Philippines 'for our little brown brothers for whom Christ also died'. This ignored the fact that the Philippines after 350 years of Spanish rule was 85 per cent Catholic already!

Travel brochures often encourage the traveller to expect friendly pampering. One widely promoted Caribbean advertisement, had a staff of black cooks, maids, bellmen, drivers, etc. with trays of food and flowers out waist deep in the ocean offering these goodies to a white couple lounging on a rubber raft. Gender was not the issue but racial and economic dependency; however in postcards, brochures and souvenirs the gender dimensions, like that of race, is well worth exploring.

Under Philippine dictator Ferdinand Marcos, the tourism slogan was 'Where Asia Wears a Smile' - and the advertising promised 'a tanned peach on every beach' (Richter, 1982). Nude or scantily dressed women are the staple of many postcard shops. To its credit, the Philippines under President Aquino was one nation that dramatically changed its government marketing of tourism (Richter, 1988). Indonesia, on the other hand, sells pictures of nude tribal people (both male and female) and penis sheaths at its Biak airport shop. The exploitation of native peoples is so much easier after you take away their dignity.

In Hawaii, this is taken a step further. Authentic Hawaiians are not even pictured, but usually some generic Polynesian-cum-Filipino-Japanese mix deemed more sexy for North American and European markets. Blond, blue-eyed women are more apt to be the erotic subjects of advertising targeting the Japanese!



Even the United States permitted its government tourist office to promote one of its Caribbean territories with giant buttons saying 'TRY A VIRGIN ... island'. Happily, it evoked an appropriately negative response when called to the attention of the Coalition on Third World Tourism and the Caribbean Council of Churches (Richter, 1989b).

In 1984, a new product hit the market with the editorial approval of the *Honolulu Star Bulletin* - 'scratch and sniff' postcards. Scratch the females pictured and they give off scents of the flowers of Hawaii. Someone once said, 'No one ever went broke underestimating the taste of the American public!' Similarly, there would not be a shortage of sexist souvenir kitsch should one try to collect it. Even Dan Quayle when Vice President was not alone in buying a little Latin American male doll with sexually explicit moving parts.

In sculpture, be it marble, wood, or terracotta, in pictures, black velvet or canvas, in virtually any medium, so-called 'airport art' flourishes. Not always, but nearly so, when human beings are the objects, they are sexually explicit female renditions.

Gender and attractions

Even though women figure prominently in advertising, postcards and souvenirs, they are sadly neglected in cultural and historical tourism destinations supported by taxpayers' money. Battlefields do not celebrate those who nursed the soldiers; galleries do not provide showcases for female talent; museums may feature fashions from an era or the dresses of First Ladies, but they seldom recall the daring adventures or courage of women. Statues recall war heroes, 'forefathers' not 'foremothers', 'founders of towns' (not their invisible spouses). In the United States the Statue of Liberty, the Madonna of the Plains and monuments to the frontier woman occasionally remember women as a category, rarely the specific woman.

It was not until the 1980s that a museum of women's art was opened in Washington, DC with private donations. Even the most beautiful tourist site of the world, the Taj Mahal, while built as a crypt for a woman, is remembered as a testament to Emperor Shah Jahan's love! Thus, the impact of tourism continues to socialize generations to the importance of what men have done while women are ignored or immortalized on postcards, nutcrackers and T-shirts.

Prospects for policy changes

Will 'who gets what, when and how' change as more women enter the workplace, as the numbers of both men and women travelling accelerate? Probably. But the prospects for greater balance in gender control are mixed. The vast bulk of the financial control of the private tourism sector is in the hands of men. That is almost equally true of the public sector. Government policymakers, be they political appointees or career bureaucrats, are overwhelmingly male. The US example illustrates this point. The executive branch is overwhelmingly male at the policy-making levels (GS 16-18). Only two of the President's cabinet officials in 1992 were female, along with 5 per cent of the members of the House of Representatives, and 2 per cent of the Senate. Forty-seven of the fifty states are headed by male tourism directors (Richter, 1985). In 1992 the present author was the only female among the fifteen members of the National Travel and Tourism Advisory Board. In March 1992, however, the first ever female United States Secretary of Commerce, Barbara Franklin, was confirmed, and a woman was also head of United States Customs. The Philippines was



unusual in 1992 in having a female Secretary of Tourism and three female undersecretaries. The Aquino role model accelerated a pattern already more pronounced there: more women in the poorly paid public sector versus more men in the private sector, but at least the women are in positions of influence.

Women have been perceived as particularly appropriate for 'frontline' tourism positions because they are assumed to be more social, more hospitable than men. In fact, in the Philippines, the euphemism for tourism prostitute is a 'hospitality girl'. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, former prime minister of Pakistan, actually saw tourism as a new sector that would be ideally suited to women, whose employment and social uplift were a priority with him. For that very reason among others tourism was seen as a force of corruption and pollution among conservative forces in Pakistan and within other Islamic cultures. Christian churches in Asia, the Pacific and the Caribbean would be inclined to agree. In the Maldives, a tiny Muslim nation in the Indian Ocean, only men are allowed to work at the tourist resorts which are on separate islands physically isolated from the rest of the population (Richter, 1989a).

Ideological forces now sweeping the globe are encouraging less national planning, more devolution of power, greater privatization of industry including the privatization and deregulation of the tourist industry. These forces may create an industry more susceptible to market forces but it may deprive further those with the least influence and political access. Equity, systemic justice and the public interest, which were seldom well served by the tourist industry before, may have an even greater struggle in the days ahead (Richter, 1991a, b).

As this writer has noted elsewhere:

The primary reason why US tourism policy has not taken a more holistic approach to tourism is because of its fixation on tourism as a revenue producing activity rather than as an important facet in improving the quality of life by reducing stress, enhancing education, instilling variety, and contributing to shared family experiences. While concern for revenue is reasonable since tourism generates billions in federal, state, and local taxes, such a perspective ignores the non-monetary features of tourism policy and the not so easily quantified monetary costs of tourism development. Unlike much of the industrialized world, which also appreciates tourism's economic impact, the United States and its policy has not moved beyond the profit motive to a consideration of the role of leisure in the promotion of health, reduction of crime, reward of labor, or the importance of travel as an information medium. (Richter, 1991b)

On the other hand, the anti-incumbency fever that has gripped not only the United States but political institutions around the globe may argue for a stronger role for the ultimate political outsiders - women. However, as I have argued elsewhere, there are many reasons, - to assume that class, race, religious and ethnic loyalties will continue to be more salient than gender (Richter, 1990). What we do know is that women in public office have shown a disproportionate concern for social welfare and environmental issues, for the issues of health, women and children - all areas towards which the unfettered tourism industry has on many occasions been overly cavalier (Darcy et al., 1987). Thus, if women achieve more access to representative institutions and public policy positions, current research suggests they will have an impact on tourism in specifically those areas where women have had least control and influence. Stronger worker safety, wage and



health laws might be anticipated.

A phenomenon as massive as tourism and a variable as basic as gender cannot be discussed thoroughly in this brief space. Clearly, however, there are numerous evolving dimensions of this relationship that deserve further scrutiny. Once we acknowledge that tourism has been marginalised and trivialized as a research subject and requires careful analysis, it is a logical next step to explore its impact in the context of such a basic variable as gender.

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Commoditisation and Commercialisation of Women in Tourism: Symbols of Victimhood

Gender discrimination in India today is being presented as an aberration in the inexorable drive towards developments. Despite the attempts of the Government to promote the view that the new economic thinking is gender sensitive, the ideological and cultural changes that are coming in the wake of the process of globalization are denying the space that women in India had created through their struggles and through their participation in several significant mass movements. The denial of this space is being projected as the only route to modernisation, and the prices we have to pay for modernity is the process of structural adjustment. In many Asian countries which embarked on these processes before us we have seen that essentials have become unavailable, poverty has been enhanced and unemployment has made survival a day-to-day struggle for sections of the people described as under-developed, marginalised etc. Amongst these groups and in society as a whole, in the process of globalisation we have seen women emerge as symbols of victimhood.

Global tourism offers us many illustrations of this victimhood. Where the 45's formula is the invisible export for hard currency hungry power elite being manipulated by the irrationality of market forces. International organisations, financial institutions and the travel trade have acquired a mythological status and our governments submit, with a sense of inevitability, to the dictates of the World Tourism Organisation, PATA, ASTA, ITB etc. This is because the mythological stature of these key ideological institutions manipulate consumption around exercise. This is done through setting impossible targets to net the 558 million international tourists who form the market and the competition now lists the top ten destinations as well as the top ten earners of the tourist 'dollar'. There is even a formula for being declared a 'destination' - a country which earns 10% of its GDP from tourism.

Tourism is legitimized as the human need to recreation. What this statement ignores is the fact that tourism has grown out of gendered societies which inform all aspects of tourism development and activity and all these processes embody gender relations. Our diverse and complex social structures, economic, social, cultural, political and environmental are conditioned by gendered relations. Tourism engages in all these structures in the process of its change, with consequences for the marginalised individuals and communities that become a part of its structure. The impact of tourism on gender has only recently been studied by social scientists, although the cultural construction of gender, in combination with the variable of race is only now being looked at. In the area of tourism studies this approach is likely to raise many new issues, as the issue of gender and race have added insights to so many other policy issues. Tourism activity and promotion offer a very fruitful area for the application of the variables of gender and race to study the negative impacts of tourism in relation to the distribution of power, social privilege and the socialisation of gender roles in tourism processes. The legitimacy for looking at gender and race derives from our context in India where we see variations in both the responses and experiences to the dominant (global) power structure we are trying to adapt to. In seeing the impact of tourism on women and their victimisation through Commoditisation and commercialisation, we see the variables of gender and race as significant not only as independent variables acting on tourism but also as inter-related and being affected by tourism.



Given the fact that travel has been differentially accessed through the ages, it is only in the 20 Century that women as travellers have had an impact on tourism. Tourist behaviour expressed in graffiti, litter, the uncouth tourist (ethnocentric behaviour) and subjectivity and representation of women in the brochure or tourism advertising, all point to concepts that are applicable to men alone. Women travellers described as 'well-bred and, respectable' fall in the category of privileged women or women as extensions of their missionary, coloniser or executive male family heads. As a result there has been very little emphasis on the needs of women as tourists either in terms of amenities or creating destinations and attractions for them. Similarly in the travel trade the gendered nature of employment is never stressed. Jafari pushes the role of tourism in giving economic opportunities to women without the consequences of gendered stress and change in power roles within the family and community. He does not look at the consequences of displacement of women from their homes and traditional economic activity. Many have tried to justify tourism related activity as being innocent as far as negative impacts are concerned, and have laid the blame on modernisation; however the pace of tourism development is both a form of modernisation and equally immoderate, particularly in developing societies. The issue of sexual harassment is particularly severe, given the sexualised environment-escape, adventure, romance, which remove constraints in the employee – tourist relationships. The clothes and submissive behavior insisted on by employers encourage the view that respectable women are tourists whilst fallen women are barmaids and chambermaids. Here race also adds to stereotypical connotations.

The relations that emerge from tourism activity are an expression of the global debate on forms of power and control. The fact that there is a debate indicates that the mainstream discourse is being contested at the ground level. The issues the debate has thrown up reflect on power relations as reflected in race, class and gender which are not only interrelated but also critical issues in the tourism debate.

Tourism shapes our identity and that of others. Therefore control of tourism is important. Unfortunately it is not the so-called 'host' population that is the agent in selling national, including gender, images. Governments and the tourism retailer are not accountable other than to the tourist or the international trade. Interestingly, tourism projects do not win votes and tourism policies are rarely debated in Parliament. Gender relations in tourism are a non-issue. In India, tourism policy is in the hands of the central government and is strongly influenced by major lending institutions and multi-national companies. These institutions are primarily male and controlled by whites. Today we have a woman minister of state who is not sensitised to the women and tourism debate and reflects the white/male orientation of government, lending agencies and international bodies dealing with tourism. She has been totally co-opted by the mainstream discourse.

In looking at the process of commoditisation and commercialisation we have to question how such relations are constructed, how do they change over time and what implications do they have with regard to equality? The social and political impressions of tourists are not neutral. They are created on the basis of a knowledge of what can be bought and sold, how to use influence and power and what is of value and what can be discarded. In this process tourism structures history and shapes a culture by reducing it to size by the use of political subjectivity. In the naming and



framing process of tourist advertising also we see a ritualistic emphasis on gender and racial stereo-types of the tourists as the idle rich white population of western Europe and the USA for whom India is programmed as the Royal Orient, with all its feudal patriarchal representations. It is now becoming increasingly important to look at such representations as expressions of sexism and racism, just as activists did when they forced Air-India to retract the "Bare India" poster featuring a bikini-clad woman to promote Goa.

Within the tourism debate Nash (1989) has looked at tourism activity and the tourist product as an embodiment of inherent power relations in the privileging of American fast food, hot showers and English language. De Kadt (1979) links Tourism to colonialism and North over South domination. Britton (1982) as tourism to core domination over periphery. According to Selwyn (1992) such controls retain underdevelopment in tourism as a part of the gratification of the rich. Tourism is therefore a part of the process of incorporation of developing countries into an exploitative system which looks at gendered social processes but on patriarchal terms; for example, the distinction between work and non-work for men and women is seen in universal or natural terms and not as gendered.

Within these societies that tourism reduces to a small place reality is however varied and complex. We can see these complexities in the division of labour, social construction of sites, the social construction of the other, the social construction of the tourist and the resident, the experiencing, construction and consumption of tourism itself which distinguishes the role of men and women; yet we do not see solidarity on the issues of gender since not too many of these writers have looked specifically at gender issues or used a gendered perspective. (Exception V. Kinnard and D. Hall Eds. *Tourism: A Gender Analysis*, Wiley, 1994.)

All societies, whether 'host' or 'guest' embody a changing set of gender perceptions, stereo-types and relations as a part of their notion of reality; for example sex tourism is a part of all patriarchal societies but the emphasis in studies on sex tourism is on colonial power domination, particularly Japan in the South East of Asia. Its acceptabilities located in colonial women preferring their men to visit foreign rather than local prostitutes, as the crossing of the threshold of liminality is thought to be less threatening. The impact of racism is stronger than gender consciousness.

In tourism activity paid work is closely bound up with gender and in the global underclass that is created Asian women are represented as traditional (not influenced by Feminism) and therefore more suitable to signify the daydreams and fantasies encouraged by the promotion of tourism. (Urry, 1991). The tourist brochure and the travel shows on satellite TV push the key ideological features of western society in a non-western context. Thus action, power and ownership are associated with men and passivity, availability and being owned for women. (Bride buying - M.O.B.'s). This selling of otherness generalises and then institutionalises particular gendered perceptions on race, generation and class.

We see this process of commoditisation establishing itself in the socio-cultural field where the traditional is opposed to the modern, the "Self to the Other". The Self is never the Asian. Cohen (1983) has pointed to the legitimisation for seeing/selling traditions as the other and he has raised, along with many others, the issue of authenticity to capture the changing meaning of culture and the arts, within which are also located issues of gender, class and ethnicity.



How do societies deal with commoditisation in Tourism activity? Men retain the marketing functions whilst women remain in the sphere of production (from the working of the souvenir trade to the glamour industry, entertainment and prostitution.)

In the sphere of social values commoditisation is dealt with in a similar way, through what is popularly known as the demonstration effect, where the local women are represented as pleasing commodities and the woman tourist is commoditised by local men—several cases being reported in the press, with the grandson of the Chief Minister for Punjab being a notorious offender.

Within the family there is a change in the traditional division of labour. Women either carry the double burden of breadwinner and homemaker (what has been termed the Mother/Whore dichotomy), creating tensions due to male/female roles being reversed. In rural areas women head households without access to resources and the younger generation gets drawn into sex or drug tourism resulting in a power shift to the younger generation but on patriarchal terms (Garhwal, Manali). In the past few months we have seen several reports of young men and women acting as couriers of the drug mafia being apprehended by the police in India. There was also the controversy over women in Garhwal posing nude for a small dollar fee for tourists since their husbands are away in the army.

In the area of environment we see the emergence of safari tourism as a socially constructed form of hegemonism where women become the victims of the process of privileging nature over human needs. Their fuel and water needs which were met through forest produce or their grazing chores have become onerous since the notification of sanctuaries and the zoning patterns being implemented to ensure free access to the tourist.

We see that in all spheres of meaning the representation of women falls within the framework of 'genderism' as either sex objects, publicity props, domestics or as the repositories of family honor. These are all mechanisms of control. The women's movement in India has been coming to terms with this emerging problematic and the tourism debate has to come to terms with these issues. This involves decoding how gender and sexuality have been socially constructed at the personal and inter-personal level.

Tourism, through commoditisation, legalises the marginalisation of gender, since the national tourism industry is dependent on and performing, a friction within an international framework. We can therefore conclude that economic marginality, racial inequality and unequal gender relations are particularly fertile grounds in the construction of tourism, since many promoters of tourism consider tourism an apt vehicle for creating opportunities for such problems to be resolved. However Foucault considers commoditisation and commercialisation as focus of control to strengthen larger, hierarchical systems which aim to institutionalise racism, sexism as social class privileges rather than to seek salvation for the victims. Any resolution of these conflicts emerging in the process of the growth and expansion of tourism will therefore require resolution in other mainstream discourses as well. The solution lies in identifying and locating the source of gendered crimes and building a movement of solidarity both within and without in the broadest way possible.

Nina Rao

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The slogan in the beginning of the 20th century was progress. The cry at the end of the 21st century is survival. The call of next century is hope.

(Taken from a document by Vishtar, "Stories and Documents of People's Struggle: Resistance and Hope", published in 1997.)



Women and tourism: invisible hosts, invisible guests

Few outside the burgeoning tourist industry defend the over development of the South for the pleasure of the Northerner seeking the formula of “sex, sea, sand and sun.” Not only have been host communities not been consulted about the use of their resources and the appropriation of their culture, but their land, water, and access to public places have been taken away in many tourist centers, often over their strenuous objections. Long after the damage has been done in many parts of the world, the impact of tourism is being described and catalogued — but only up to a point. To the extent that women have been considered at all in the debate about tourism, is generally as victims, either in terms of sex work or advertising which portrays them as sex objects. Few studies examine the particular experience of women as hosts, entrepreneurs, craftspeople, or even as observers of the tourist scene.

This essay looks first at why so much attention has been paid to sex tourism, then reflects on the few studies which look at the many other impacts of tourism on women. Our intention is that the information be used as a starting point for future research, analysis, strategy and action to be taken by policymakers, community activists, and academics. Ultimately, the hope is to learn more about what really happens to women in tourist areas, and spread the word so that:

The damage tourism has already done to women can be understood and mitigated.

Future development can be designed in a way that includes women and their interests from the very beginning.

Policy guidelines can be developed so that tourism development can be as constructive for women as possible, and women’s experience in one community can be conveyed to those in another, to help them make better decisions.

Virtually all of the attention to the female half of the host countries has been focused on sex tourism (both independent and organized tours). Why? There are certainly constructive reasons, but some of the criticism is based on Northern stereotypes of Southern women as helpless victims on the one hand, and on the other as sensationalized, lascivious whores ready to fulfill every male fantasy. Sex tourism outrages such a broad race of political bedfellows. Feminists, nationalists, religious organizations both locally and internationally, community members who are fearful of change and angered over the way women have been used. Righteous indignation spouts both from the defenders of the purity of womanhood and those who seek rights and liberation. Coming from completely different and often conflicting perspectives, the critics of sex tourism converge to oppose it. The root causes are so deep, however, that few would say much progress has been made, and some indicate that the sex trade is livelier than ever. Reformism will have little effect until women have real occupational alternatives to the “quick buck” of prostitution.

Some parallels between tourism and prostitution have been noted by Shubhendu Kaushik and others: a natural urge satisfied unnaturally, profit by the middleman, money as the driving force, and degradation of the buyer. The issues seem to be even deeper. Sex tourism is a powerful symbol of what has happened to host communities. Even though tourists are a relatively small percentage of clients in many “destinations”, they contribute disproportionately to the economy,



and their presence may lure women in with the hope of escape (Walter Meyer). Prostitution within a community is unfortunate enough, but it has different implications when tourism is involved, not only in scale and stakes. Tourism represents the commodification not only of a particular culture, but of women's role as nurturer and caretaker, the all giving — taken to the extreme in sex tourism, in which the woman's actual body is sold.

When women are up for sale to outsiders, especially for a price which is cheap to them, the community has lost something irretrievable. Unfortunately, it is often cast in terms of males losing access to the sexual services of females as being an outrage to their manhood, rather than women's having no other viable economic options as being an outrage to their womanhood. The prostitution of women also represents the loss of something private and sacred, for female reproductive power was worshipped before anything else on earth. If tourism policy is a signal to the North that a country is ready to meet tourist's expectations (Cynthia Enloe), surely sex tourism is the ultimate concession or selling out.

Even in the Northern context there is controversy about prostitution - whether it is simply degrading to women, or whether it is a valid way for a woman to make an independent living doing what others do as unpaid work. It is difficult, however, to make a case that the bar girl in Manila or the streetwalker in Bangkok is in any way in control of the rural poverty which drove her into her job, or the system which keeps her there. While she may feed her family and have some years of relatively lucrative employment, she is in a death trap in the long run. She earns, but at the price of her health, her self respect, and the recognition usually available to women in her society.

In the context of the tourism industry, the steadiest, least seasonal, and by far the most lucrative opportunities for women are in sex work. It is tedious, a health hazard, can be degrading and dangerous, and is characterized by a downward career path. But for a Southern woman pressed by necessity, caught between the ideal of female sexual purity and the ideal woman's providing food for her family, there are few other choices. Once in the system, her fate is often sealed, and it is no surprise that many conceal the true nature of their work from their families, and even from themselves (Kathryn Poethig). In many ways, the commercialization of sex is a metaphor for the inauthenticity of the guest/host relationship, in that it is an attempt to buy and sell what really cannot be bought and sold. In spite of everything, however, some real relationships do develop in both situations (Erik Cohen).

The prostitution of women is simply at one end of a continuum of service activities provided for tourists, and, as the extreme, it has attracted more comment than the more palatable forms of prostitution: the hotel manager who is anticipating and catering to the tourists every whim; the packaging of a traditional dance or festival; the modification of handicrafts so they appeal to the Northern taste; the ad which depicts an air hostess's compliant smile. The only difference is degree, not kind. Some of the criticism of sex work undoubtedly stems from a legitimate concern for women's welfare. But much is based instead on outrage that women are violating the standards of female purity, that they are earning their own money and have, to varying degrees, escaped the control of their families.



Sex tourism deserves significant attention because it unites diverse constituencies against a common problem, it symbolizes what happens to host communities, and is the most extreme and obvious form of prostitution. Anyone who cares about women is outraged by it. Action is needed, and needed urgently. Yet tourism affects women in many, many ways other than pushing them into sex work. In the flurry of outrage over prostitution, the many commoners, more everyday and less extreme effects have been noticed only glancingly.

For example, critics rightly decry the diversion of community water supplies to hotels so that tourists can over consume in swimming pools, bathtubs, lawns, and so on. The resulting lack of water for the hosts themselves may be protested, or even the worse quality of the drips which remain. But few have taken the next step, to notice and object to the fact that it is a local woman who must pay the price for the tourist's luxuries. It is she who must go farther and farther to find smaller and smaller amounts of water, who must carry less over greater distances. She is the one who must make do with less in cooking and in washing herself and her children. Her working day, often already overextended to include paid as well as unpaid work, is lengthened further.

It's particulars like these which must be observed, understood and analyzed if future strategies for tourism are to assist women rather than burden them further. In areas where tourism has already run riot, advocates need to include the costs and benefits to women in their calculations about appropriate remedial action. Where new development is being considered, women must not only be thought about, but they must have a voice in the process. When critics of tourism advocate consulting the community, they must mean women as well as men — and those women need to have access to the experience of others elsewhere to help them make good decisions.

Remarkably little attention has been given to the full range issues concerning women and tourism: the roles the industry creates for women, women fighting tourism development, women shaping tourism policy and practice, and how tourism affects women. Basic questions remain virtually unexplored:

- What are the roles which the tourism industry creates for women? The information available indicates that the roles are very similar to those in Northern economies: primarily service jobs, often seasonal, invariably low waged and perhaps temporary as well. The only decently paid work to which most women have access is sex work, and it involves numerous disadvantages. The coercion of poverty, which drives women into many forms of substandard employment in the tourist industry, operates more strongly on women, who are poorer than men the world over.
- What part are women playing in restraining tourism? In communities around the South, people are objecting more and more strenuously to unthinking tourist development and practices. Who are the women leaders in that movement? What role do women play at the global level in addressing tourism issues? If their perspectives are fully heard and incorporated into the overall agenda of transforming tourism surely the issues will be defined more comprehensively, in a way that includes gender as an important variable. A basic question never asked is a variant on the classic- "What do women want from tourism?" Are they looking merely for income? Is it the possibility of marrying a foreigner and escaping poverty, like the Thai sex workers (Erik Cohen)? Is it a glimpse of another world - just such a glimpse as the tourist him or herself seeks?



■ To what extent are women shaping tourism, as policy makers, managers, owners, guests, workers and service providers? Each of these deserves a study of its own. While women are probably a tiny minority in the more powerful roles, the underside of the iceberg gives it shape at least as much as the tip, and women are all too well represented as air hostesses, chambermaids, waitresses, and other “invisible” occupations (Cynthia Enloe). As guests, women are almost unstudied (Valene Smith), even though there is ample evidence that they are critical decision makers in travel destinations, and have somewhat different priorities than male tourists. While we know a lot about male guest’s fantasies of paradise, how much do we know about women’s? The meaning of the tourist experience is different for them. To some extent, a tourist destination is a place where men of one class can enjoy the privileges of men of another class, and women can enjoy the privileges of men. Someone else will cook their meals, make their beds, and clean their toilets. In some places, like the Gambia, women can also solicit male prostitutes, or, probably much more commonly, take their pick among the many host men who show an interest. Now there are even women pedophiles (Ron O’Grady). Are these women simply playing out male fantasies, or is something deeper and more authentic involved?

■ How does tourism affect women in terms of their daily lives and activities, their opportunities for health and prosperity, and their roles? How does it affect their status, both as their own community sees them, and as women striving for self-sufficiency worldwide might see them? Thus far, it seems that tourism is a double-edged sword for women, as it is for men; it both gives and takes. The information collected so far indicates that women often pay the costs of tourism disproportionately, while reaping few of the benefits. On the one hand, tourism does provide a chance for the fisherwomen in Goa to earn some money by renting her hut to tourists for which she is grateful. It may improve her status in the community because she is a more important contributor to family income, but she may instead be seen as a kind of prostitute. Tourism has the potential both to degrade and to improve women’s status. The threat of the latter is so great that, in some cases, governments and industries have been involved in elaborate machinations to ensure that the employment through tourism will not challenge the status quo. The Maltese government actually enacted a law prescribing sex discrimination in favor of men because too many low waged jobs had been created for women; one employer paid wages to girls’ fathers to ensure that male authority was not challenged.

From the moment tourism enters a community, women are positioned differently than men to take advantage of whatever opportunities or benefits it offers. They are generally less schooled, less likely to know a truly “foreign” language, less comfortable dealing with the world outside. And yet they are also among the most useful pawns the industry has to move to the front of the board to attract the Northern male tourist, depicting them as compliant, submissive, and ultimately accommodating. Once tourism goes beyond the point of a few individual adventurers, virtually every woman in a community is affected by tourism, whether she ever sees a tourist or not, whether she works in the industry or not, and whether she can identify tourism as the source of what she observes or not.

If the information gathered so far is typical, the ordinary woman outside the industry pays higher prices for necessities, because tourists have driven them up; faces scarcity or exorbitant prices for goods she once considered normal; is restricted in her movements because of explicit banning of



“natives” or because of her reluctance to expose herself to harassment; and is trying to make pay that never increases stretch farther. Researchers and activists should examine the effects of broad tourism policies and actions - such as tax breaks for hotel and infrastructure development, or manipulation of the exchange rates - on women’s daily lives. As important as those quotidian impacts are, the overall effect of tourism on women is more than the sum of those parts. Women’s roles can be deeply affected, for better and for worse.

We need a much better understanding of where and how tourism actually has helped women to lead better lives, as opposed to the all too familiar stories of prostitutes ravaged by drugs. What has benefited women? Can petty trading help improve women’s lives? If so, how can they be enabled to do it? What chance do women have of moving into hotel or restaurant management? What enables them to keep control of the money they earn?

From a Northern view, it is easy to construct a romanticized view of a female petty trader on the beaches of Goa, selling traditional handicrafts produced under ideal conditions in a comfortable country cottage. Surely she has opportunities because of tourism which would not have presented themselves otherwise. But does she have control over her own money? Does her community see her with more status and respect, or is she despised for pandering to foreigners (Shireen Samarasuriya)? Turning to the women making the handicrafts, what are the conditions of their work? What benefit do they reap from their labor, as opposed to the middleman and the petty trader? Are they seen as significant contributors to family income? What is the wage gap between their earnings as men’s, and how does that affect their value in the community? How can the community’s concepts of what is appropriate for women be changed, so that it is possible for women to benefit from tourism — or is that one more imposition of outside values and norms? These are the subtleties that must be explored situation by situation, even village by village, if we are to come to an understanding of what tourism has already done to women, and of what women have done to tourism, and of what can be done in future so that the waves of tourism will carry women forward rather than drown them.

It would certainly be possible simply to advocate obtaining for women a fairer share of the benefits of tourism as it now exists. Instead, asking fundamental questions about women should also involve a much broader evaluation of the industry and how it has developed thus far. Strategies to help women benefit from tourism can improve the industry. If, for example, one of the criticisms of tourism as it exists is that there is so little realistic communication between guest and host, women would be ideal “bridge people,” as they are in other realms of life. Because women in many cultures are socialized to be gregarious, to develop sophisticated interactive skills and to assess and meet other needs, they could make ideal tourist educators and guides.

To speculate about what keeps them from moving in that direction, the fear of contamination due to contact with foreigners comes immediately to mind. Women themselves need to be consulted about the best ways to overcome those barriers: for example, a licensing system, the use of uniforms, and public recognition might help. At another, more practical level, obstacles include not knowing foreign languages or being unfamiliar with cultural differences, and the communication and other potential problems they imply. Yet English, often the language of foreign tourists, is child’s play compared to many local languages, and people living in diverse countries are often



multilingual. Teaching English as a foreign language can readily be done in a way that also familiarises participants with other cultural realities. Women can be part of the solution, not just part of the problem.

While there has been some attention to women's issues other than sex work by tourism's critics, and some attention to tourism by women's groups, few would argue that there has been enough of either. A change is timely. Women's concerns are just as deeply linked to the environmental issues now most popular in the agenda of the critics (A. Sreekumar), as they were to the cultural impacts which received more attention earlier. Women tend those who become ill because of degraded water or air; they bear the brunt of most reproductive effects of toxic substances. They go from well to well, and are the cleaners and sweepers who must cope somehow with increasing solid waste. They are the ones who must make do in the market with the leavings of tourists, whose rituals connecting them to the earth may become the subjects of photographs or even displays. Thus far, the balance of the impact of tourism on women has almost unquestionably been negative overall. As we move toward a world where tourism is an ever greater force for change, it will take the efforts of both tourism's critics, and women's advocates, to begin to use the enormous economic and social resources of tourism as positively as possible.

Postscript

Beyond the question of how tourism affects women is the larger issue of how tourism fits into interconnected gender, race and class oppression. One commonly held view is that tourism has evolved parallel to earlier colonial patterns of economic dependency, and is merely imperialism's latest manifestation (John Lea). If one takes the view that all oppressions are intertwined it is worth examining tourism as a tool and expression of patriarchy, as Cynthia Enloe begins to do. Feminist scholars and theorists could certainly afford to amplify her and others' analysis.

As an example of looking at tourism through the feminist lens, consider what the tourist seeks. The tourist's desire is usually to be indulged like a child - being cooked for, having one's bed made, being free to indulge one's appetites at will, to play all day and stay up late at night if one wishes. In every culture across the world, a return to childhood means being taken care of by The Mother. Thus, entire host communities play the role of The Mother to a tourist whose regression and artificially amplified wealth makes him or her feel entitled to demand almost anything. The Mother is endlessly indulgent and appears to have no needs or timetable of her own, and enforces no rules.

How much of the outrage against tourism stems from men being coerced into playing female service roles with respect to tourism? As Cynthia Enloe points out, there is often much more objection to the idea of a nation of busybodies as opposed to a nation of chambermaids. What's profoundly objectionable about tourism as is currently structured is that it forces whole communities into the same unacceptable position as women in most societies: a subordinate role in which the hosts' needs must be ignored and subsumed, the entire structure of life is geared primarily to satisfying the tourist's whims, and the dignity of the hosts must be sacrificed. Just as male values, styles, priorities, activities and work are valued more than women's in most contemporary societies



so the tourist has greater weight than the host. The values of the tourist are seen as better; he has more, therefore he must be and deserve more. Transistor radios thus penetrate into small African villages, and cellular telephones appear in Bombay airport.

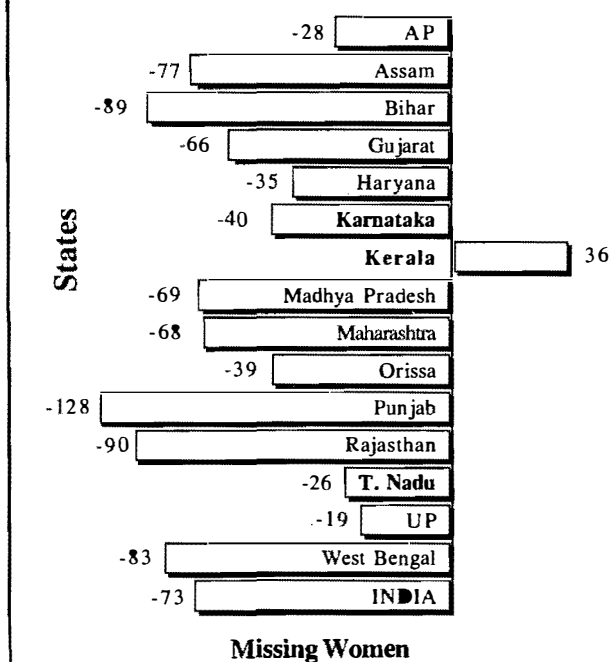
Mary Fillmore
For *EQUATIONS*, 1994

Sex ratios in major states

State	Sex ratio	
	1981	1991
Andhra Pradesh	975	972
Assam	910	923
Bihar	946	911
Gujarat	942	924
Haryana	870	865
Karnataka	963	960
Kerala	1032	1036
Madhya Pradesh	941	931
Maharashtra	937	934
Orissa	981	971
Punjab	879	882
Rajasthan	919	910
Tamil Nadu	977	974
Uttar Pradesh	885	879
West Bengal	911	917
INDIA	934	927

Source : Census Reports, General Tables
1981 and 1991.

Missing women (for every thousand men), 1991



Source : Census of India, 1991



Why Not Acknowledge Women

The title for this article was originally going to be 'Women: tourism's invisible export'. I wanted to get across my amazement and frustration that women are still not acknowledged in most of the current research or literature on tourism development, both academic or otherwise. I don't know of any tourism course that includes women and their experiences as a significant aspect of tourism development, or that offers any serious gender analysis of the tourism industry. The most that seems to be offered is a one-off lecture on gender, which is likely to be restricted to a discussion of tourism and employment opportunities, or tourism and prostitution. Both are important topics and certainly affect women, but women's experiences of the tourism industry are not restricted to these two areas. I decided against using the title because ultimately it is misleading and not true. Women are not invisible in the process of tourism development, whether as consumers, promoters and wholesalers, or as a members of the host population.

Over the past year or so, I have been actively involved in researching how women experience tourism development. Despite an enormous amount of material covering women in development and gender and development issues, my search for similar literature on tourism development has been far less fruitful. My search highlighted the dearth of material on women and gender issues in the tourism literature.

The visible women

I first became interested in the subject from my own experiences of travelling in Asia. On my return I took a masters degree course that explored in detail the sociology and anthropology of travel and tourism but did not include women. Women were very visible during my travels - it was generally women who tried to sell me fruit on the beaches in India, Malaysia, and Indonesia and it was the women in Bali who were mainly involved in petty trading, selling sarongs, souvenirs or even massages and hair plaiting. Women were just as involved in the traditional dancing displays as the men, and it was often the women who chatted to me on the buses.

Women were also extremely visible in the images used in tourism promotion. Locally sold postcards depicted 'the Akha women from the hill tribes of Northern Thailand', and 'women from the cultural minorities of China'. Situations of rapid social change, such as can occur with the arrival of international tourists to a new destination area frequently result in the local community reinforcing and emphasising its own culture and traditional ways of life. My research so far has informed me that so often it is the women in a society who are viewed as the makers of that society's culture. It is the women, therefore, who are expected to uphold and maintain traditional ways of life.

Commoditized women

The tourism industry in turn has been quick to utilise this situation and women are usually used to market the ethnicity of a particular society. Open any current brochure on India and you will be presented with images of 'Rajasthani women', dressed in traditional clothing. The only men to appear in such images are usually old men who again are more likely to be viewed as representing the traditional way of life. In Thailand, the tourism authority (TAT) opened the first viewing centre for tourists to observe the women of the Phi Thang Leung Tribe in Northern Thailand, who wear metal coils around their necks and are marketed as the 'giraffe-necked' women.



The representation of women in tourism brochures, advertisements and other promotional literature is not only confined to images of traditional culture or ethnicity. It is more common to see women portrayed as exotic and beautiful. For example, brochures on Hawaii feature only women hula dancers even though the hula is traditionally performed by both sexes. Airline advertisements are particularly notorious for representing Asian women as orientalist stereotypes of the 'exotic and sensual East'.

Images that represent women as a commodity are not confined to the tour operator brochures. Official government and indigenous promotional literature are equally to blame. Last year in India, I visited a women's group in Goa, Bailancho Saad, who have been protesting about the way Goan women are being promoted by the official tourism literature, particularly during carnival time. Goan women are already viewed by the rest of India as being more 'western' because of the legacy of the Portuguese culture and because many Goan women adopt a Portuguese style of dress, rather than the sari. However, the images used by both the national and local tourism promotional offices depict Goan women as scantily dressed and available. Such misleading images Bailancho Saad argue, have led to the reputation of Goan women being tarnished and has resulted in harassment of Goan women both within Goa itself and when they travel to other parts of India.

The missing analysis

I don't think I'm unusual in that I came back from my travels with many unanswered questions. These all seemed to revolve around women. How do women experience tourism development? Do women benefit at all, and if so how? Why is it that both the societies of the generating countries and the host countries allow women to be treated as a commodity? Why do women have to prostitute themselves to tourists? As it is so transparent, does that mean it is accepted or even encouraged by the government, and the society as a whole?

My studies confirmed for me that tourism development, like other forms of development which result in social change, involves complex linkages. Linkages between religious, cultural and ideological values, attitudes towards sexuality, material factors, and access to resources and politics. However, I was still left wondering why there was no deeper analysis of where women featured in all of this and wanting to know what tourism development means for women. The crucial and missing ingredient for me was how women perceived these complex linkages and how they saw themselves in relation to them.

I was convinced from my own observations that women are not all passive victims within the tourism industry. For example, a study carried out in San Cristobel, Mexico, showed that local women welcomed the arrival of western styles of dress, such as T-shirts and underwear, even though the attitudes of both their men folk and the tourists encouraged them to continue to wear their traditional dress.

The women were quick to learn that tourists were more likely to buy handicrafts from them if they wore traditional clothing. They therefore chose to compromise by wearing non-indigenous clothing beneath their traditional wear, which they took off once 'at home'. The existence of women's groups such as Bailancho Saad in Goa, actively negate the stereotype of the 'passive'



female victim' in destination areas. A further example is the women's agro-tourist cooperative in Greece, described by Maria Castelbourg-Koulma, where women in rural areas have opportunities to earn money for themselves directly from tourism.

Such examples show it is misleading to talk about women in general. There needs to be research which analyses how different women living in the same society can and do have differing experiences of tourism development. For instance, a study of South India showed how migrant women successfully increased their earning potential as fruit sellers and petty-traders on the beaches, as compared to local women. Local women had fewer opportunities to earn money directly, as the beach mats they made at home to sell to tourists were then sold for a higher profit by young middlemen. The migrant women, in turn, gained respect from visiting Indian tourists who were amazed to see mainly low caste women interacting so successfully with foreign tourists. And such activities are not restricted to women - I met a young three-year-old from Karnataka on her first day of selling fruit on a beach in Goa.

Access to resources

Through my discussion with both Bailancho Saad and local and migrant women, I was given numerous examples where access to local resources is restricted as a result of tourism development. In Goa, it is common for groups of young girls or older women on festival days to enjoy picnicking on the beaches. Because of the rapid growth in mass tourism in this area and because many of the luxury hotels have illegally denied local people access to the beaches, the women can no longer do this. If they do go on to the beaches, they are faced with scenes of near or total nudity from the tourists. A couple of years ago, Bailancho Saad undertook some direct action in response to this and organised a 'dress-up' campaign, where local women walked along the beaches asking the tourists to put their clothes back on. The issue of access to beaches for local people, both men and women, is by no means confined to Goa but is a problem in many destination countries.

Tourism development also affects access to other natural resources. This is felt most acutely where tourist demand makes use of already limited resources. In most of these destination areas, the collection of water and fuel is defined as women's work. This means that women are now having to spend longer at wells or to walk further to collect fuel. Additionally, they may be spending more time at the market negotiating over the price of food as prices tend to inflate during the tourist season as restaurants and hotels pay higher prices and corner the market.

Women's work

Even if these women are not living in or near to the tourism development areas, they may find that their responsibilities to their families and to the community increase because their men have migrated to the tourism areas for work. This is often referred to in the literature on women and development as the 'double' or even 'triple' burden for women (as women have responsibility for production of food, reproduction and the care of children, as well as reproduction in the sense of the wider community).

In terms of paid employment, it is often assumed that tourism as a service industry brings increased opportunities for women. My research shows that there are numerous studies and official documentation to support this belief. A World Tourism Organisation report, in 1988, argued that



tourism has the potential to generate substantial employment for less privileged groups such as women and youth. A report by the United Nations a year later on women and development highlighted the service industry as one in which there exists a high concentration of women from developing countries. They pointed out a regional variation in this and cited Asia as having the highest concentration of women in this sector. However a survey conducted by the International Labour Organisation discovered a very different scenario.

Their survey showed that men tend to predominate in the formal sector of the tourism industry in many developing countries, with women comprising only a small percentage of those employed: 2.98 per cent in India, 14.9 per cent in Sri Lanka, but rising to over 35 per cent in the Caribbean and Latin America. It is highly likely that the same survey carried out in this country or any other so-called 'developed' country would produce similar results.

One of the problems with trying to assess the employment opportunities for women arising out of tourism development is that many such opportunities never appear in the official statistics, as women are more likely to be found in the 'informal' sector. Such jobs include washing clothes for tourists, petty trading, cooking for or looking after the children of other women officially employed in the tourism industry or providing other 'services', such as massages on the beach or sexual services. At a people's conference in Thailand, a female caddie talked about her work, for which she gets paid approximately £3 per day, and of the 'extra services' young Thai women are now forced to offer as caddies. A further problem arises out of seasonal fluctuations and women may move in and out of both formal and informal employment at different times of the year.

Certain types of formal employment within the tourism industry are defused as being more suitable for women, such as reception work and chamber maiding. It is often assumed that women possess the necessary skills naturally and they are therefore not recognised as 'skills'. Consequently, this work is given lower status and therefore lower wages. As in other industries, large transnational tourism corporations are quick to find out that defining work as women's work helps keep costs down. Obviously cultural and ideological factors play a part in how work is defined. Very often the only work available for women in the tourism industry is not deemed to be acceptable by their families and the wider community. For example, in many parts of the Mediterranean it may be more acceptable for women to rent out rooms at home to tourists than it is for them to go and work in hotels.

The few studies that do exist on women in the tourism development process illustrate clearly that it is far too easy to generalise about its effects on women and to see all women in destination areas as a universal category.

Furthermore women can and do play an active part in the process of tourism development. I remain convinced that there is an urgent need for research to be undertaken which will examine and analyse how women can create and sustain both their material and cultural autonomy when faced with such development.

A fascinating study carried out in the late 70s by a Sri Lankan researcher, Shireen Samarasuriya, concluded that "little is known of the changes in the lives of women due to the so-called tourism development process". I am deeply concerned that twenty years later nothing has really changed.



Women are certainly not 'invisible' in tourism development but they remain unacknowledged and unaccounted for in the research literature and in the subjects being covered in tourism and development courses.

Anne Badger

—*Tourism in Focus*, Winter Issue, 1993, Number 10

(**ANNE BADGER**, a Campaigner and Researcher at Tourism Concern, has been studying how women feature in tourism development. In this article she questions why women have been ignored in the analysis so far, given that women are an integral part of all facets of tourism.)



I am the woman who hold up the sky
The rainbow runs through my eyes
The sun makes a path to my womb
My thoughts are in the shape of clouds
But my words are yet to come

- Poem by the Ute Indians



Section Two

The Technological Dislocation

[The experience has been that despite promises by the government to include gender sensitivity in overall policies, the thrust in the economic sphere nullifies this. Economic liberalisation and opening up to market economy invites private sector into the system, which otherwise was controlled by the State. The pressures to compete in the global market, propel industries, particularly the tourism industry, to develop a new kind of work culture based on modern technology. Thus the assurances of Government goes in vain. With the effectiveness of the state system loosen it is becoming difficult for people to maintain their place in the system. This is being felt increasingly to women in their workplace. It is a known fact that womenfolk have fewer accesses than their male counterparts to acquire modern skills. It is also unfair to expect of women, who are selling fish, making cane baskets or working in agricultural fields, to cope with the present day of technological advancement. Also no longer can the simple womenfolk get access to the natural habitat and resources, which once was a source to her livelihood and family sustenance. The concern about the implications of new technology for the income and job opportunities of unskilled women workers in rural areas where modern tourism development locates itself is becoming increasingly evident. The following chapter is devoted to highlight the modern technological dependency in the liberalisation era and its effect on women's traditional practices]

Effects of IMF/WB Policies on Women In India

India is caught in a debt trap. While the earlier loans from the WB and IMF were soft loans, the present ones have come along with the structural adjustment programme (SAP). Gabriele Dietrich examines the general features of SAP and its effects on women in particular. She then goes on to a brief discussion of the root causes, the alternatives available and addresses the question of the forces that can stem off this neo-colonial sell-out.

General Situation

Today India is third among the most indebted countries of the Third World, right after Brazil and Mexico. This is the result of a trend which could be strongly perceived since the early eighties. The pressure in this direction came both from within as well as outside. Globally, the eighties is the decade in which WB/IMF have established hegemonic control over the poor nations with disastrous results especially in Africa and in Latin America. India, having more reserves of her own, has been relatively late in catching up with this trend. The internal pressures leading to this direction have to do with the expansion of a vocal middle class desperately trying to catch up with international standard of prosperity at the cost of the poor. Military expenditure is also an important factor. This means, the disaster is an invited one which could have been avoided. However, by now our debts is something like IR 2000 bn- exact figures are nearly impossible to come by. It has been pointed out that once debt servicing surpasses 30% of a country's expenditure, it is caught in the debt trap and has to incur new debts in order to deal with old ones. This State of affairs has been reached by us over the past 5-6 years. What is worse, while earlier loans were so called soft loans, the present loans have gone along with inclusive interventions of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). This means crucial decisions about our economy are no longer in the hands of the government but are virtually dictated by the WB. This is why there has been discussion of a sell-out of Indian interests to the WB. In this brief paper, I will first go into some of the general



features of SAP and their effects on women and will then try to spell out more specific problems in rural and urban sectors. I will then go into a brief discussion on root causes and alternatives and finally raise the question on the forces that can stem the tide of the neo-colonial sell-out.

Main Features of SAP

One of the most obvious features has been devaluation of the rupee, along with inflation and price rise of basic commodities. While general inflation is to be 12%, food prices have increase upto 25%. Increase in transport cost, steel prices and excise duty, are likely to keep inflation high. Obviously, women are most affected by this as they have to balance the family budget and have less access to cash anyway.

Privatisation of industries: This leads to loss of scarce work for middle class women as more employment for women was available in the public sector. Also, it leads to more pressure on the unorganised sector in which most women are employed.

Doing away with superfluous labour force, from golden handshake to mere retrenchment. This implies rising unemployment and wage freeze or deterioration of wages. This again hits women as they not only lose their own employment but also have to cope with unemployed husbands, criminalisation of unemployed youth etc.

Export orientation of production process and liberalisation of imports: This hits the availability of basic consumer goods and means of subsistence i.e. less to eat, less fuel water and means of survival.

Exit policy—Closure of non-remunerative units of production. This again enhances unemployment. Viable take-over by workers has not been contemplated.

Curbing of people's right to organise and rise in police and military expenditure (14% increase in expenditure for police department, defence increased by 7%). Women are directly affected by the resulting violence.

Fiscal reforms: High interest rate and credit squeeze. Money flows towards the rich who have invested. Small producers, especially women, are hit hard.

Curbing of "wasteful expenditure".

Cuts in education (Elementary Education cut by 14%, formal education cut by 17%). As women seldom rise beyond elementary education, they are most affected.

Cuts in the health sector. This means more burdens on women in health care. And Family Planning is pushed, especially drugs like NetEn and Norplant which are harmful to women,

Curbs on the distribution system: Agricultural policies suggest reduction in food buffer stocks, curtailment of the role of FCI, crop price formula linked to international prices, disbanding levy schemes of procurement of rice and sugar and liberalisation of farm inputs. This means, women will face incomparably more hardships in getting basic foodstuffs, fodder and fuel.



Scrapping of subsidies: While one may welcome scrapping of subsidies for Maruti cars, cut in subsidies of basic foodstuffs will hit family consumption drastically.

One has to keep in mind that these measures meant to balance the Indian economy have not had any of the desired effects. Prices of essential articles have been rising. Industrial production has declined, there has been an enormous boom in the stock market, speculation and black money (there was, i.e. until the SCAM made it collapse) while the burden of stabilization and structural reform is entirely on the poor, most severely on women.

Even exports have declined in dollar terms by 1.9%. However, as a result of import compression, the trade deficit was the lowest ever \$ 1.61 bn. Even this should not make us over optimistic. We have to keep in mind that even after structural adjustment, the WB forecast on Trade Reform in India fore spells deficit in balance of payments of 3-4 bn dollars annually for a period of at least 5 years.

Effects in Rural Situation

Much has been written about the onslaught of IMF/WB on the peasantry. As was already pointed out above, opening up Indian agriculture to the world market is the key issue. There will be less food reserves and subsidies on the one hand and more freedom to import inputs and food on the other. One has to keep in mind that the international food trade is monopolised in the hands of only a few very powerful MNCs. A powerful attempt is being made to control Indian agriculture by means of GATT (General Agreement on Trades and Tariffs), forcing India to recognise intellectual property rights and to agree even to the patenting of life forms. The overall tendency will be towards expansion of land under cash crops and destruction of subsistence cropping. Industrialisation of agriculture and expansion of agribusiness will become a policy. This will also lead to more concentration of land, small farmers swelling the ranks of landless agricultural labour at the mercy of the policies of MNCs who can pull out if wage demands become higher. This is a direct onslaught on women peasants while women agricultural labourers will face more competition from men losing land. The traditional knowledge systems of women about seeds, life-stock and agriculture as well as soil regeneration and water management will be discredited and destroyed. Their methods of seed preservation will be deemed illegal. Natural resources like water, soil, forests etc. will be exploited by the market and not be made available for basic survival needs. Rural water supply schemes have at present been slashed by 38% and rural sanitation expenditure has also been curbed together with cuts of 12% in IRDP, 44% in rehabilitation of bonded labour, 18% in budget for environment and forest, 23.5% in wastelands development programmes, 25.4% in biogas and 40% (in real terms) of provision of land reforms. There are no easy answers how this onslaught can be withstood.

Women's organisations on the whole do not have a rural mass base. Even where women and landless labourers are organised, they do not usually have an influential bargaining power. While peasant organisations do have a mass base, it remains to be seen how their stand will evolve vis-a-vis the above issues. The Shetkari Sangathana in Maharashtra, in extension of its demand for fair prices for agricultural produce, has welcomed liberalisation and plans to do export-oriented biological agriculture. However, it may encounter severe hurdles as the safety standards for exported food have to answer to the definitions of the MNCs who may declare biologically grown food as



“unsafe” (e.g. spreading plant diseases) while they declared chemically treated, irradiated and gene manipulated varieties as “safe”. The organisation has also not grappled with the problem of Intellectual Property Rights and patenting of life forms. A critical question within such organisation. Experience in fisheries and elsewhere tells us that export orientation in food production works towards elimination of women. In the Shetkari Sangathana, an attempt has been made since the Chandwad Conference in 1986 to give women property rights in land. This is now stepped up by the Lakshmi Mukti campaign where each village fulfills targets of transfer of land to women. In this campaign, women can use the income from the land according to their own will. But the practice has been to use this land for subsistence production with traditional natural inputs. This campaign may be significant in two ways: It re-emphasises the connection between women and biologically and ecologically viable subsistence production. At the same time there is an interesting dynamism in the Lakshmi Mukti campaign as it divides land in four categories. Majghar Sheti and Parasbag Sheti which are different forms of kitchen gardening and a second and third variety, one for internal trade and one for export. As the men keep control over cash crop cultivation, there may arise a certain amount of conflicting interest between survival and subsistence rights versus the laws of profit. At the same time one has to keep in mind that without land reforms, the problem of agricultural labourers, poor women and dalits, will remain unresolved. For these sections, emphasis on subsistence crops, development and reclamation of wastelands, watershed management and redistribution of water rights irrespective of property in land are the much more crucial issues where action needs to be taken. Such issues of basic right of life and resource control also needs to be incorporated in the struggles of Dalits, human rights groups and ecological movements.

Gabriele Dietrich

Excerpts from Globalisation and SAP trends and impacts - An overview -

Edited by Ajit Muricken

Burn our land
Burn our dreams
Pour acids on to our songs
Cover with saw dust
the blood of our massacred people
Muffle with your technology
the screams of all that is free,
Wild and indigenous

(Extract from the Palestinian poem, “The Seed Creepers”, translated by Shanthi)



Changing roles and status of women in fishing communities

Fisheries are popularly considered a male-dominated activity and even a male domain. That this perception is not valid is evident to anyone familiar with the situation in fishing communities. Numerous studies focus on the roles women play in fishing activities, in sustaining the fishing family and community and in protecting local food security, roles which are often glossed over and remain invisible. While the nature of these roles vary between countries of the North and South, and from area to area and community to community, there can be little doubt that they contribute directly to sustaining fishing families and communities and to sustaining fishing as a way of life.

In countries of the South, as in India, Philippines and Senegal, where the artisanal sector continues to play a vital role, women of fishing communities are often involved in direct fish-related activities, especially in the pre- and post-harvest stages. They engage, to a lesser extent, in fish harvesting, primarily in inshore waters for species like crabs and mussels, and often for consumption purposes. In artisanal fishing communities the household often functions as a unit of production and roles of both men and women tend to be complementary, with women responsible for land-based activities, such as net-making, processing and marketing fish, while men engage in fish harvesting. This also allows women to continue with their responsibilities of sustaining and maintaining the fishing household, of producing life and caring for it. There is then a clear sexual division of labour.

Looked at from this perspective, it is evident that the roles of women and men in sustaining fisheries, both as an economic activity, and as a culture and way of life, are finely enmeshed and mutually dependent. The perception that fisheries is a male-dominated activity is grossly inappropriate. That women's roles remain invisible is more to do with patriarchal processes and attitudes prevailing in society. It is also such processes, operating through the state, media, religion and the family that have eroded women's control over and access to resources.

In Kasaragod in Kerala, for instance, women were traditionally the ones who inherited fishing gear by marriage, and decided what to do with the catches. In the 1970s, when the government made bank loans available to fishermen, thereby recognising men as the owners of the equipment, women lost their space in the control of fishing operations. While many women still go fish vending in Kasaragod, most of them purchase the fish they sell.

Today, women's spaces in the fisheries are undergoing several changes, as the fishery sector itself changes in response to globalisation processes, changes in technology and greater market pressures, and as it becomes more industrialised and export-oriented. These changes are evident in the increasing number of mechanised boats, the shift towards more 'efficient' fishing gear, bigger harbours and centralised landings, bulk purchase and processing of catch, and greater exports, especially to markets in the North, such as the USA, Europe and Japan, and, more recently, China. The shift to more efficient, capital and energy intensive fishing technology has facilitated over-exploitation of fish stocks at a hitherto unprecedented rate. World fish production increased rapidly in the 70s and, subsequently has increased at a declining rate. The increased pressure on fish stocks has led to spectacular collapses in many regions, as for examples the collapse of the cod stocks off Atlantic Canada. From all parts of



the world, there is evidence of gross mismanagement and over-exploitation of fish stocks. The FAO estimates that 70 per cent of global fish stocks are fully exploited and 16 per cent are over-exploited.

All these developments have had severe consequences for the artisanal sector. To survive in the changed scenario, many have joined the race for fish by adopting over-efficient technology and gear. The face of the artisanal sector has changed considerably in the process, and there are far greater levels of differentiation within the sector.

What have these changes meant for the women of fishing communities, especially those women involved in the processing and sale of fish, in net making and mending, or in the harvesting of fish?

Much has changed in the last few decades for women fish vendors, traders and fish processors in countries like India. For example, with the construction of harbours and landing centres, landings are more centralised. Local women are often disadvantaged due to this, since they have to travel farther to purchase fish. Large traders procuring fish in bulk for processing and export are a more common sight at landing centres, and, as a consequence, women petty fish traders and processors, operating on a small-scale and with little access to capital and technology, find it difficult to procure quality fish. This is more the case as, with resource degradation, fish catches decline and there is greater competition for fish.

Women fish traders have had to deal with this changed reality. In Andhra Pradesh, for example, with the construction of the harbours at Vishakapatnam, many women who earlier handled both fresh and dry fish for retail sale in or around their villages, now travel to the harbours to purchase trawler by-catch. Several women from Kakinada travel 30 km to the Vishakapatnam harbours to purchase dry fish and pack the trawler by-catch to transport it back to the local market in Kakinada. They function in difficult conditions. There is no space allotted at the harbours for them. They are regularly harassed and often have to pay bribes to authorities. They are provided no facilities of shelter or sanitation.

The availability of fish for local women to process has declined with greater export-orientation and the growth in industrial processing. Besides affecting employment opportunities available to women fish processors, this has also had implications for the availability of fish for local consumers, and for food security.

Women fish vendors in the busy harbours area of Ratnagiri in Maharashtra, for example, now find it more difficult to procure fish. Agents of merchants often advance money for the daily operations of boats and trawlers and they enjoy the right over the landings. They are present on the beach with their weighing balances to buy prawns and other export varieties of fish, and to take them to processing factories. Women fish vendors can only get what is not needed, i.e. trash fish. Earlier, only prawns and cuttlefish were bought by exporters. Now, seer fish, ribbon fish and other cheaper varieties are also purchased to be exported to countries such as Hong Kong and China.

Women involved in net-making also face a changed situation as machine-made nets displace hand-woven nets. In Kanyakumari district of Tamil Nadu, for example, the introduction of net-making machines rendered unemployed thousands of women earlier employed as net-weavers.



It can be argued that new avenues of employment have opened up for women fishworkers, even as old forms of employment and income have been lost. There is no doubt that some women have taken advantage of the changed situation, extending credit to mechanised boats and selling the catch to distant markets, earning large profits in the process. New work opportunities have also come up in fish processing plants.

These developments were discussed at the Workshop on '*Gender Perspectives in Fisheries*' organised by ICSF in Senegal, with participants from 12 countries of both the South and the North. Participants were of the opinion that while some women fishworkers may be benefiting from processes of industrialisation and globalisation, in balance, more women are losing their spaces in the fisheries, their right to fish, and control over and access to resources. For example, women in the processing sector in countries such as Philippines, Senegal, Brazil and India, are increasingly being absorbed as casual labour in processing plants owned by big industry, with little or no access to social security benefits. Conditions of work are poor and wages are low. In India, fish processing plants in coastal states like Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh, employ migrant female labour from Kerala, often under exploitative conditions.

It is also true that women of fishing communities in several countries of the North and South are experiencing greater difficulty in sustaining the fishing family and community. With declining catches and fewer employment opportunities in fisheries, incomes in the artisanal and small-scale sector have often dwindled or stagnated. The pressure on coastal areas and resources has increased, with unregulated urbanisation, growth in tourism and industrialisation. Fishing communities are often displaced from their traditional lands and their access to fishing grounds is disrupted. Depleting ground water resources and diminishing forest cover in the coastal belt have made tasks of fuel and water collection, traditionally the work of women, more difficult. Moreover, fishing villages are usually remote, and often lack basic health, education, transport and other facilities.

As eking out a living becomes more of a struggle, women of fishing communities, in several countries like India, Senegal and Philippines, have come together, independently or as part of fishworkers' organisations, to focus attention on their problems. They are lobbying state agencies demanding, among other things, transport to ferry their fish, access to credit, training and technical information, and marketing support. They are demanding access to clean drinking water, to housing and sanitation, to health and education and a better quality of life for their communities. They are questioning development policies that lead to the degradation of natural resources and concentration of profits in the hands of a few, while, at the same time, depriving them of their means of livelihood and sustenance.

In doing so women are exerting their right to participate in discussions on fishery management, and, in the process, are redefining the scope of fishery management. They are challenging state fishery agencies and even fishworker organisations to look beyond their preoccupation with fish harvesting activities per se. They are stressing the need to focus on pre- and post-harvest activities and on other livelihood issues of concern to the fishing community. Women of fishing communities do not see fishery issues apart from issues of fishing communities. They are broadening the emphasis of fishery management to move beyond biological issues, to include the social and the economic.



Their understanding of a sustainable fishery is, therefore, equally concerned with sustaining fishery resources as well as the men, women and children of fishing communities who depend on fishery resources for their livelihood. It is equally concerned with fishing as an economic activity and as a culture and way of life. Men and women of artisanal fishing communities are well aware that their future, as well as the future of their children, lies in the sustainable harvesting and management of fish resources.

In conclusion, what this essentially implies is that the issues raised by women of fishing communities cannot be seen as 'women's issues', that can be addressed by one-off interventions. They cannot, in fact, be seen apart from 'fishery issues'. Their perspective relates to the development of the sector as a whole as well as larger developments that affect their life and livelihood. It is important that, as vital actors in the fishery, they be given their rightful place in decision-making processes. It is important that they be able to shape developments in the fishery, both for the sustainable management of fishery resources, and for the survival of the thousands of fishing communities in different parts of the developing world.

In practical terms this means, among other things:

- Making women's roles in fisheries more visible, especially through better collection of census data.
- Facilitating the involvement of women fishworkers in decision-making processes that influence developments in fisheries, at the local, regional, national and international levels.
- Protecting the traditional access of fishing communities to natural resources and strengthening local management and control over these resources.
- Improving the access of women fishworkers to credit, transport, technology, training and other support systems, to protect and expand their spaces in the fisheries.
- Initiating coastal area management programmes, keeping in view the interests of fishing communities.
- Improving the quality of life in fishing villages through the provision of health, education, transport housing and other basic facilities.

Chandrika Sharma

Programme Associate

International Collective in Support of Fishworkers

(This paper was presented in a seminar on Consultation on Coastal Realities in Tamil Nadu, Madras School of Social Work, Chennai, 28 and 29 January, 1998).



Women bear the brunt of Asian financial crisis

Associated Press BANGKOK, Jan. 22, 1999

WOMEN and girls in South East Asia have been the hardest hit by regional recession, losing jobs, health care and school opportunities, the UN Population Fund said on Thursday.

Many women have turned to prostitution to feed their families as factory jobs have become scarce, the UN agency said, but they earn less since their clients are also feeling the economic pinch and have little money to spend.

Citing a recent survey carried out with the Australian National University, the Population Fund examined the effects of the 18-month crisis on reproductive health, education and employment of women in Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia and the Philippines.

"Mass unemployment has created a new poor," the report said. Unemployment is up and so is the number of school dropouts, with girls the most disadvantaged. The recession has been especially hard on single mothers or women with heavy financial commitments.

Women turning to prostitution meanwhile are likely to have limited education and resources with which to protect themselves from sexually transmitted diseases.

In Yogyakarta, Indonesia, a clinic treating sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS reported that the number of patients had doubled in the nine-month period surveyed, the report said.

Technology not Free of Gender Bias

KANWALDEEPSINGH in The Times of India, 17.03.98

There has been considerable debate recently on the impact of economic liberalisation on women. In particular, there is concern over the implications of new technology for the income and job opportunities of unskilled women workers in rural areas.

The pressures of competing in a global market make it imperative for technology and work practices constantly to be modernised. One side of the debate is that this will have an adverse impact on female workers. They have fewer opportunities than their male counterparts to acquire new skills. As such, they will not be able to equip themselves for the changing requirements of the labour market. The counter view is that technology will raise the income and productivity of women workers, expand employment and create new avenues for entrepreneurship among women. In sum, technology will set into motion social and economic processes for the empowerment of women.

Two Arguments

It might be interesting to examine these two broad arguments in the context of the actual experience of female workers with technology in rural areas. Several new tools and implements have been created in recent years for women working on farms. As with the urban middle class housewife, the woman farm worker today can use technology that reduces drudgery and widens her options for economic and social progress.

Equipment, both manual and power driven, has been developed for a whole range of farm activities traditionally undertaken by women such as sowing, harvesting and threshing. The arduous task of transplanting rice, for instance, in which almost a third of India's female labour force in agriculture is engaged, can now be done conveniently and in good time with a manual transplanter. Technology has also entered off-farm food processing, another domain of women.

While lessening her burden, technology has potentially created new opportunities for the rural woman. She could, for instance, operate farm equipment on a lease basis. Or use gadgets to add value to farm products through processing. All this can push up employment and wages.

Unfortunately, experience on the ground has not matched expectations. Studies suggest that these technologies are not being widely adopted. Rural women continue to sweat it out on the farm and at



home, with measly returns. This is because new technology is helpful only up to a point. Beyond that, a range of complementary conditions are required for technology to be effectively employed. There has been little effort by the state to create these conditions.

To begin with, farm technology in India is designed primarily for male operators. The Central Institute of Agricultural Engineering (CIAE) in Bhopal, which has designed and adapted farm equipment for over three decades, finds that little attention has been paid to whether women will be comfortable working for long periods on the equipment. There is not enough consideration given to the fact that female workers in various regions differ in terms of physical strength, preferred posture and attire. The CIAE concedes that there is a gender bias in technology owing to the absence of female researchers and technicians to design and evaluate it.

Further, most rural women are not trained to handle the equipment designed for them. At best, extension officials might demonstrate the way the equipment is operated. Women often have no opportunity to handle the equipment and familiarise themselves with it. Certain social processes also inhibit change. Women are often not well informed about technology and with decisions on modernising farms taken primarily by men, there is less chance of a switch to equipment that saves women drudgery.

Lack of Information

Finally, if investment has been made in an income-generated asset, it is imperative that she be able to sell the output for a reasonable profit. For this, the asset should yield a quality product, have low maintenance costs and use inexpensive, locally available inputs. In the absence of marketing infrastructure, gains from technology often accrue to middlemen rather than to the women who have invested in it.

This is not an argument against the use of technology on the farm or, for that matter, anywhere else. It is to emphasise that technology is not an end in itself. Whether as washing machine or wheelbarrow, technology can empower its users so they have to spend less labour on existing activities and avail of new opportunities. For women, this will happen only after they have the training and resources to access new technology and equipment.

Women in the edge

Elayne Clift in The Business Line, 23.03.98

Macro-economics as a women's issue? It would appear to be so as trade structures like GATT increasingly affect the environment and context of women's lives. Elayne Clift on EDGE, an organisation that is teaching women to be concerned and involved both as workers and consumers.

In the present global climate of growing private investment and free trade alongside shrinking international foreign assistance budgets, women have more cause than ever before to understand and be concerned about the issues of macro-economic development. So says Ritu Sharma, Director of the newly organised Women's EDGE - the coalition for Women's Economic Development and Global Equality. Women's EDGE, a revitalisation of the former Coalition for Women in Development, was started in Washington D.C. in March 1997 to address global macro-economics. Its founder members felt, as Sharma put it, "that it was important as a women's community to essentially put our mouths where the money is. And the money is in private investment and trade."

Global trade is not new, as women who have been traders of goods and services across national boundaries for many years, well know.

What is new is the increase in the number of rules, laws and treaties governing trade. The acronyms being bandied about - the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT), the World Trade Organization (WTO), Fast Track, North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) - are all basically sets of rules that govern trade and investment. All these evidence the trend toward more structured investment and trade, structures that can affect the environment and context of women's lives profoundly.

For example, worldwide there are now more and more 'export processing zones'. These zones crop up because countries set up specific geographic areas where tariffs are low and tax structures are such



that foreign corporations can easily invest, produce goods and export quickly with a minimum of financial barriers. These zones tend to employ a mainly female labour force (in some places the workforce is 80-90 per cent female). If nothing else, that makes the trend very much a women's issue.

In addition, women as consumers need to be concerned and involved. As Sharma points out, "We have a lot of power to change the behaviour of corporations as consumers of household goods. We are also more directly affected by such things as pesticides in foods, exposure to chemicals, and so on. We need to be engaged."

The issues are complicated. While there is a great deal of exploitation of women in export processing zones (such as long hours and low wages) many women still want the jobs even if labour and safety standards are lacking. These jobs provide them with an economic outlet, provide some power and autonomy through earned income, and can provide improved access to health care and education.

"It's not a zero sum game," says Sharma, "That's why Women's EDGE doesn't only look at the negatives of global trade on women, we also consider potential benefits."

One of the issues facing the organisation is the domination of trade agreements by the Group of Seven, or G-7, the richest nations in the world. Sharma explains, "These agreements are just being handed to developing countries with a take-it-or-leave-it attitude. Very few organisations have been able to voice their concerns or to participate ... certainly not citizens' groups, labour groups, environment groups, and women's organisations."

Women's EDGE is working closely with others such as the Women's Eyes on the World Bank Campaign, a member of Women's EDGE, to dialogue with institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary fund (IMF).

In addition, it networks and communicates with various women's organisations around the world to ensure that the positions it takes are not detrimental to women. Careful to avoid the perception that American women are dominating or speaking for Third World women, Sharma points out that it is important to have a US presence on international women's issues because "the US does tend to throw its weight around pretty heavily on issues of global trade and macro-economics."

In the shorter term, Women's EDGE' goals include educating the public, particularly the women's community, about MAI and other trade issues.

A lot of education is needed, its leaders point out, because women's organisations here and abroad still have not yet heard of the agreement, don't understand how macro-economics affect their constituencies, they don't yet see macro economics as a women's issue.

In the longer term, they plan to link organisations and individuals concerned with gender and economic issues in both the domestic and international arenas, engage policy leaders in discussions about policies and programmes of the executive and legislative branches of the US government, conduct advocacy aimed at incorporating gender issues into major international trade negotiations and intergovernmental conferences, and create a larger more diverse US constituency to participate, in the policy process in support of women's advancement.

Women's roles need to get more priority

(Ruchi Tripathi, The Times of India Bangalore, 14.03.98)

When there is talk of provider we think of the male head of the household. He is the provider the protector. But only so much as the outside world is concerned as he is the interface with them. If we peep into the household especially the rural ones, and check against the crucial reference – who produces the food, who fetches and fills the water, who collects wood for the fuel, who collects wild food for consumption, who collects forest products for sale – the answer to most of these would be the women.

Women are the users and conservers of biodiversity. They are not only the largest producers of food in the world and are responsible for the collection of food, fuel, fodder and water. They are the closest to nature, through their day to day interaction with nature. Much of their needs are met by the earth. They are also the major stakeholders in preserving biodiversity at the local level, primarily because of their reliance on the same.



With men taking to farming and other lucrative options, women are left to fend for their families. With migration being rampant in rural areas, the number of female-headed households is increasing. Women do not have the resources for farming and are seen to rely on the common property resources (CPRs).

The role of CPRs cannot be emphasised more in the context of rural households, especially for the poor women. It has been noted that till the end of the last century, at least 80 percent of India's natural resources were common property resources with 20 percent falling in private hands. CPRs have been used as grazing lands for animals, common water tanks and water bodies forming an important source of water, forest resources providing fuel, wild food and additional income.

When talking about food security, one often misses out on the importance of water. Collection of water for household consumption is solely women's task (with the help of children) and it takes up a large portion of her time. According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation, in some parts of Africa, women and children spend eight hours a day collecting water.

Rural women rely heavily on the forests for their fuel and fodder requirements. With depletion in the forest cover and reduced access to the women, they are the ones facing the brunt of it in the form of reduced fodder, fuel, and wild food. Animals also contribute in providing manure and fuel in the form of traditional dried cow dung cakes or the biogas plants promoted by the government. It is sad that when technology has tried to come to the rescue of women, it has often led to increasing the control of men in that sphere. Government's biogas plant (which uses animal manure to produce fuel for cooking) initiative was a flop in many places as the women were not involved in its management; and the government extension agents spoke to the men and explained them how to operate the plant. This increased the dependence of the women on men, as they were the ones with the knowledge to operate the plant.

Is women's relationship with nature something inherently feminine; or is there a sociological construct to it? Ecofeminists argue that in the patriarchal view, women are associated with nature, and men with culture. Nature which can be subjugated by culture, is perceived as inferior. Further, because subjugation of both nature and women occurred together, women have an inherent interest in ending this domination.

Industrialisation and globalisation has certainly exacerbated gender discrimination. But, by blaming industrial development we are negating the power of patriarchy, which existed before the onslaught of Industrialisation.

By restricting and typifying women as providers – we're over-looking their role in the productive domain. Women especially in rural areas have conflicting demands placed upon them. Due to the 'triple burden', of reproductive, productive and community managing work as identified by Caroline Moser, women often find themselves fulfilling their reproductive role only.

The above ideology also faces the danger of maintaining status quo and gender hierarchies. To understand the relationship of women with nature, we need to look deeper into discrimination faced by women.

Women are perceived as and applauded for their role as reproducers. They face the danger of being shunned lest they are unable to fulfil their productive role. Men are comfortable with seeing women in that role.

Human development Report 1995 attempted to put a value to the invisible, non-monetised work of women, which contributed \$11 trillion to the world economy (out of the total \$16 trillion non-monetised work).

It is simplistic to equate women with nature and men with economy. It is true that women are found more in the subsistence sectors, and are the ones who are primarily involved in utilising and conserving biodiversity.

However, their economic role of selling the same in local markets often gets negated and in some cases there is a sanction against this. It is more a social and historical construct that women took to the role of providers of food (including water), fuel, fodder.

It is more because of the gender bias and inherent discrimination against women in technology and the current global ideology which has relegated women to the backwaters of the economic and social system.

With the global race intensifying the divide between the two systems - subsistence and commercial - is only likely to increase.



Section Three

Stark Realities

[Tourism development and its impact on women is one of the least researched area in India. Lack of such studies results in reinforcing the notions propagated by the tourism industry and that government documents. That women are beneficiaries of tourism development, opportunities for employment of women in tourism is enormous and that it helps to improve their overall status in the society. While it is true that this is applicable to all spheres of the development debate tourism needs special focus since women are a significant component of tourism promotion. Empirical studies are proof enough to highlight the issues debated earlier in this document. From the beaches of Kovalam and Mahabalipuram, to the plains of Goa covering the women in the mountains, a careful search have been done to highlight the impact of tourism on women. The dearth of material on this particular issue, other than sex tourism is a testimony as to how little attention is being paid to the consequences of this modern industry on women. Couple of examples borrowed from the reality also does not approve of the tall claims of the industry. With an understanding of the process of tourism development and its activities on the one hand and the technology of this modern era on the other hand, this chapter will focus on the ground realities of this type of tourism development with the help of case studies and articles available at hand to substantiate the arguments put forth in the earlier chapters]

Women and Tourism

The Government of Kerala has taken a policy decision to develop tourism. The tourism programme has grown very rapidly, as the figures for tourist arrivals in the state indicate.

The growth has covered both inbound and outbound international tourism as well as the arrival of domestic tourists to Kerala. The Department of Tourism at the State level has also taken up Central Government projects and following from the National Action Plan, Kerala was the first state to identify a special tourism area, Bekal, to be developed with foreign investment into a big mass tourism project, to help India achieve its 5 million arrivals and access higher returns in foreign exchange. None of these developments have involved discussion and debate at the state or local level. These have been administrative decisions, and when the secretary tourism was questioned on the undemocratic manner in which tourism decisions were taken, he saw the issue of tourism as beyond the comprehension of local people. On the other hand, foreign experts were invited to suggest how and what kind of tourism should be developed in Kerala, which had very little exposure since the Kovalam Beach Resort never realised the potential of international arrivals, being overshadowed by Goa.

Today, the tourism policy of the government visualises many new products and new players in the sphere of tourism. These include new beach resorts, hill and wildlife as the basis for adventure tourism, special tourism areas for intensive development, backwater cruising and festivals that package the culture and craft of Kerala for the benefit of the tourist. Every district now has a privately sponsored tourism festival, which often contravenes the Coastal Zone Regulation as it



promotes tourism awareness. The second aspect of the tourism policy is the dependence on the private sector to develop the infrastructure and the superstructure for tourism and its related activity. Today, the Kerala Government, Tatas and the Casino Group are the major players in tourism development and they have an understanding of tourism that does not look beyond the commercial aspect of tourism development. There is also the desire to invite foreign investment for large-scale development to increase the number of arrivals from abroad to enhance foreign exchange earnings.

An intervention in policy making by office bearers of local self government bodies who can function in the interest of local people is essential. This can be effective only when they have an enlightened awareness on the developmental options that the government offers to the people of the state. When EQUATIONS began to acquaint itself with the Bekal development plan, it was surprising for us to learn that not a *single panchayat* opposed tourism development because the thrust of the government's propaganda was that tourism generated income and employment.

Several studies relating to tourism development in Kerala indicate that the socio-cultural impacts of tourism have been very negative, particularly, relating to the issue of drugs and prostitution. Tourism projects have also displaced local people and affected their traditional occupations. The environmental impacts of tourism have also been negative particularly in the coastal zone and in the hills. Tourism needs regulation rather than promotion. Not only regulation, but the issue of tourism needs to be debated so that there are people-centered objectives rather than growth-centered objectives. Unless the people of Kerala arrive at some consensus on the kind of tourism they want to develop to achieve economic objectives, the control by outsiders, multinationals, international agencies and the monopoly houses in India will not end.

One area that needs to be focussed on is the issue of gender and tourism. Women panchayat members, being leaders of their communities, have the added task of familiarising themselves with the gender issues that emerge in the developmental debate, since most planners are male and most models are male dominated.

India is a gendered society, which means that human relations in economic, social and cultural life, as well as in the political framework are determined and mediated by gendered perceptions. To clarify further, *gender* does not mean only the difference between men and women biologically but on their human relations being based on the status of women in society and therefore the perceptions of their social role and function. Tourism and the industry that supports it, as well as the administration that encourages its development, growth and expansion, is an interpersonal activity which is influenced by and in turn influences local and global gender perceptions. There is a list of global perceptions that have been researched, to develop a gender framework, for analysing developmental activity particularly tourism.

1. **Tourism as a part of modern consumerism:** Consumerism embodies social practices as well as signifies social change. As leisure time and wealth increase, tourism consumption also increases. As expansion reaches the remotest corners of the world, the marketing and consumption models between guests and hosts have indicated several possibilities for gender analysis. Power, control and equality in tourism are articulated through race, class and gender in the practice of tourism. Men and women through interconnected economic, political, cultural, social and



environmental dimension., are involved in different ways in the construction and consumption of tourism. It is the recognition of these differing realities that shape tourism marketing, tourist motivation, and resident action. This process may be called the creation of stereotypes. For example, in all Asian societies where traditional society is intersecting with global economic systems, we have seen that the major public role of women in the tourism industry is in sex tourism. The faster the process of liberalisation and globalisation, the greater the spread of sex tourism.

2. Tourism as an aid to development. Women activists have always seen the statistical approach to tourism as apolitical. If tourism is seen as an activity that depends on leisure time and disposable income, then the enabling conditions are hierarchical and influenced by class and global economic strengths. In tourism advertising women are seen as passive, available and dependent. Women are thus sexual and exotic markers in the tourism brochure. Destinations reinforce this stereotype not only of the resident community as a whole (poor and ready to serve) but also of the women as inferior or as objects of gratification or as playthings.

3. Tourism and Division of Labour: Tourism, like other activities, perpetuates the international and domestic division of labour. This means that there are gendered employment activities (cooking, cleaning, serving, handicraft etc.) as well as control of waged work. There is also no computation of unpaid labour by women. The question that tourism raises is that women do not have leisure from certain types of work, and this compulsory, unpaid labour is extended to their working life as well as economic opportunity. Tourism encourages classifications like women's work.

4. Tourism development and its influence on changing value systems: Tourism is an essentially modern activity that promotes 'tradition' as a unique and authentic product. In this process of commodification, not only is it important to define the other, but to define the gendered other. These changes are reflected in identification with tourist behaviour, changes in family systems age and sex hierarchies in the struggle for economic power as well as changes in the social and political status of different sexes in different classes and different production systems.

5. Tourism and environment: What is our relationship to the environment, how do we use these resources, how can we regulate the consumption driven nature of tourism and how can traditional practices be documented and compared with the approach of providers of tourism services, is now being looked at. For example, it is suggested that as agriculture becomes less productive, tourism (rural, farm, beach or resort) becomes a valuable alternative because it allows a combination of domestic responsibilities of women (which are nurturing as well as reproductive), with tourism work, which is seen as an income source that can support small scale farming and thus conserve the countryside. Such an approach suggests that there is a need to change (through an external intervention) women's relationship with nature, the environment and their place in the ecological system.

Our perspective must include certain issues. For instance, the division between one who enters the business and earns an income from it and one who is displaced. The latter has to move away, adapt to a new location and find new survival strategies on how to access new resources. For example, tobacco, coconut harvesting, fish sorting and processing are women-dominated activities in Bekal. Tourism is a loss of income for them and does not use their traditional expertise. Neither does it provide them compensation or retraining or re-employment.



Then there is the time element in tourism benefits trickling down. The deterioration of traditional communities and their activities is faster and the upward mobility slower. This is because tourism is established for the high spenders and in the organised sector, rather than in the informal sector. Similarly, in the handicrafts production industry, market forces demand mechanisation, which results in the retrenchment of women workers, who are then shifted to finishing, which is lower paid. Soon this process is also mechanised and women have to look elsewhere for jobs.

At the social level, tourism has forced middle class families to send their girls (aged 9-12 years) away from Kovalam, so that they are not known as the Kovalam girls whom no one wishes to marry since the reputation of the beach resort for prostitution brings dishonour to the whole community. Honour of the family and the community in gendered societies rests in the chastity of the women of the household, the village or the township. Domestic tourism is also predominantly single male tourism, which encourages prostitution. Indian women are not encouraged to travel on their own. Tourist behaviour is seen to be unsafe for women who are the repositories of the family's honour and the tourism process may bring dishonour. This need for safety and security is not met for women in Indian society although it is seen as the duty of the men in the family. The changes that tourism introduces benefit those sections that are a part of the new land use pattern. This is generally the educated, urban middle class. Since the middle class owns land, it recognises and promotes money as an indicator of status, aspiration etc. However, the landless, the poor and the small peasants are also looking for an opportunity, therefore they look at the *panchayat* plan and the government policy for such openings. Rural women, though educated do not find the time or the money to attend courses or find employment in the travel trade. They have to await the establishment of the services in the organised sector and then find employment at the lowest level. The policy and the People's Plan look at basic needs like roads, drinking water and have now included tourism, but there is no support in the policy for the informal sector in tourism. Similarly, when a district, like Wynad, is declared a tourism district by doing an audit of its resources for tourism, does the developer and the planner focus on the needs of the tribal, the migrant, the agriculturist, the plantation owner or the women who need an income supplement? Or is the focus on the tourist and the industry? What happens to the demands and needs of women and their role in development?

It is upon these questions that we need to focus on, bring in support for women's organisations and see that the tourism issue is put on their agenda and that we adopt their understanding on women's issues in our agenda. There is need, therefore, to build a data base and alliances with different sections of the government, the industry and social activists and concerned citizen groups to study the issue of tourism and debate the model being implemented in Kerala. Information and awareness is not only to be based on the motivations of the tourists and their need for services and products. It is to be based on the needs of the people and their perceptions of how tourism is to be developed and what benefits are to be derived. We must also be made aware of the negative consequences of tourism.

Finally, there is the issue of income generation as the only measure of development. Income, particularly in the case of tourism, is not stable, not under the control of the hosts, but manipulated by the trade. Secondly, income alone need not indicate growth or mobility because income is only one relation in the production-consumption process, and its impact on interconnected social issues need not be productive or liberating. As far as the issue of foreign exchange earnings is concerned,



one must examine how global economy and lifestyle affects the individual and the community. In what way does it to bring women more power, influence and prosperity? In what way does it bring freedom to them? Does income or foreign exchange change the gendered perceptions of society to transform the social position of women? Attempting to answer these questions and issues will be the first step in the direction of empowering *panchayat* women as they plan not only for today but also for the future because once the engines of tourism have been set in motion, it will be difficult to stop them.

Nina Rao

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(This article is an extract from the keynote address by Nina Rao at the Workshop on Women and Tourism organised by Institute of Management in Government, Thiruvananthapuram held from 21-23 July 1997 at Kochi, Kerala. The workshop was aimed at the women panchayat members of Kerala. It sought to focus on the links between women and tourism in Kerala.)





Kovalam: A Fishing Village Appropriated By 25 Years Of Tourism

Summary

Kovalam was the first beach resort to be developed, along with Goa, on the Western Coast of India. UNDP had suggested that India should change its image from that of a cultural tourism destination to that of a holiday and vacation destination, and identified both locations. Today, the Government seems to have come to the understanding that the kind of development that had been planned for Kovalam was not forthcoming. That it had allowed the tourist 'hippie' grapevine, along with the informal sector to develop the destination, and then followed up with upgraded facilities.

Within a period of twenty-five years this small fishing village has become an important international tourist centre. 65,000 foreign tourists visit Kovalam every season (October to March). Many are repeat visitors and some remain in the village for a long stay. The initial informal development, home stays with local families, participating in the local tradition of smoking Ganja (cannabis), an off shoot of ayurvedic medicine, cheap food at local eateries, and a friendly community, led to the emergence of Kovalam as a paradise for the backpackers. Then the government moved in, built tourist facilities and privatised the beachfront.

The State Government Undertaking, KTDC, has built a three star Samudra Beach Resort, used mainly by domestic tourists and the five star Ashok Beach Resort built by the Central Government Public Sector Undertaking, ITDC. As tourist numbers rose, Kovalam began to attract the attention of Kashmiri migrants, and Bombay business families began to buy land for private development.

Fisher folk comment that Kovalam was a better place before tourism arrived. They did not get the benefit of income or employment and most of them are pained by their total displacement. Labour in the coconut processing industry has also been displaced as the landowners sold off their plantations to land speculators. Many have found alternative jobs in road construction or granite works. Crime and police presence have increased. It has also become a centre for prostitution and there are evidences of child prostitution also.

Women learned to cope with the breakdown of the community, and established new survival strategies on the margins of tourism activity. This project tried to incorporate women's experience into a new, people-centred, planning process. Since the Panchayats (local self-government) had listed tourism as the third option in the Peoples Plan and had given 33% reservation for women at Panchayat level.

Part I, Background Information:

Kovalam is a coconut village (of 2,000 households) a short bus ride from Trivandrum, the state capital. Sturdy coconuts provided toddy (a coconut beer), copra, the dried nut for coconut oil (the popular cooking medium) and husk for making coir (a yarn for making rope). These were the common trading items which constituted the major economic activity. The community consisted



of small and medium landowners and wage labour to tend the tree and harvest the nut. Labour was also hired for coir making and transportation. The village community was gradually moving towards factory production. Traditionally, the people here were also involved in agriculture, fishing, coir industry and stone breaking.

The most significant community, the Ezhavas, a backward caste, were known for their progressive ideas and social reform movement. They were the social leaders and the community practised a marriage and kinship pattern that tended to keep clan ties close.

Fishing at Kovalam has now become a marginal activity when compared to Vizhinjam located 2Kms away. The fish caught here are considered to be of finer quality and taste, with fish bred in rock crevices in totally unpolluted waters highly regarded. Fisher folk communities are predominantly Muslim and their Mosque is located next to the private beach of the five star resort.

Politically and economically Kovalam was well developed, in that it had an active tradition of local democracy and the building of the base for capital accumulation. Local body, community organisations and political parties had led struggles against the bureaucracy, the police, nudism on the beach and against prostitution. Trading capital was successfully reaching the commercial centres of South Kerala as well as the neighbouring fishing communities.

Tourist arrivals in the 60's and 70's were no more than a trickle. In 1987 foreign tourists in season numbered 50,000. They were mainly from Western Europe, with Australians and Japanese in smaller numbers and Americans just beginning to enter the market. Low budget tourists were in large numbers at the beginning and end of the season, with the high spenders coming in the high season, on package tours. Tourism had become a significant presence.

Today, The beach is teeming with tourist shops, food, drink and drugs. There are more than 250 trading establishments, which comprise of hotels, restaurants, temporary kiosks, curio shops and massage parlours. Hotels and restaurants are around 90 in number. Most of them have contributed to the violation of construction regulations and discharge of solid and liquid wastes into sea. Lack of planning leading to unplanned and unregulated constructions have also caused severe sea erosion in this area.

There is an acute scarcity of drinking water as its distribution to the public is not well planned and implemented. 95% of the population depends on the surface well for water. Drainage facilities are also inadequate.

More recently, land speculators from Bombay have started to buy up land and develop small hotels for tourists. A 200-crore tourism development project is to come up on an area of 250 acres and consists of hotels, golf course, convention complex and entertainment facilities. The State Government for the development of Kovalam beach resort has sanctioned a sum of Rs 25.42 lakh. The major stakeholders include: small and medium sized land owning families, fishermen, and labourers. We focused on the 1,500 fishing families, since 455 were displaced with the construction of the five star resort. After displacement 25% were given plots along the seashore,



but were moved again to the interior. The rest were taken to the hilly area 1 km. away from the shore. It is this group which has been alienated from their traditional link with the shore. They have no proper approach road, no market facilities and a shortage of water. Each family was paid a compensation amount of Rs.900/-, which was not enough to construct their new house. Those who were displaced for a second time were given an additional amount of Rs.1, 200/-, which again was inadequate for resettlement. The compensation given reflected the fact that these residents did not have any legal status, although 84% had Patta Lands (land registered in the village records). 34% of the resettled families have yet to receive authorisation for the new land given to them. There was no organisation of fishermen to resist displacement or to demand compensation at market rates. Their demand for jobs for the second generation, which was educated, was not realised since they had no bargaining power with the Government, which was the developer. Of the 293 employees at the Ashoka resort only 8 were from the local fishing community. About 25% of the fishermen earn a paltry sum from tourists who wish to be taken out in the boats. They also provide fish to the hotels.

Of 150 randomly selected respondents, 84% were concerned and agitated over the rise in crime (which they attributed to outsiders coming into the village as tourism grew) and the fact that Kovalam had become a centre of prostitution. Local men and women found it difficult to find marriage partners since the tourist centre was considered notorious, with murder, theft, drug peddling and prostitution being visible activities.

Kovalam was transformed and the traditional economic activity became a casualty. In the place of the coconut related industry, granite quarrying (for the new and growing construction industry) prostitution and drug peddling have been established. In 1995, 30 young men and women were sentenced to 10 years imprisonment for drug trafficking. The Commercial sex workers in the area have also increased. Many of them are migrants from Trivandrum and the neighbouring state of Tamil Nadu, where tourism related prostitution is well established at places like Mahabalipuram, also a coastal resort. College students from the city have also been enticed to enter the trade. The network is controlled by male tourist guides and rates range from Rs.100/- to Rs.3000/- per night. In October 1998, eleven minor children were rounded up by police and send back to their home state, Karnataka. The State Women's Commission revealed that it has received complaints from local as well as foreign tourists about minor children involved in prostitution. Social workers running the AIDS awareness programme identify the loss of traditional livelihood and community safety nets as well as the consequent expansion of tourism as the primary reason for prostitution. Neither the sex workers nor the tourists seem to be concerned about health hazards since Kovalam is not in the eye of the media storm on this issue. Kerala is known to be a state with high literacy and education and this may also give sex workers and their clients a sense of complacency. This is the result of the market-oriented policy on tourism being adopted both by the state and central governments.

Part II, Key Objectives:

Since the Government of Kerala had advocated the development of tourism as the key industry to solve the unemployment problem of the state, and given the fact that most of the unemployed are educated, we were concerned to see to what extent an awareness of the costs and benefits of tourism had penetrated into the local communities and to establish greater interaction. We



organised a workshop for women representatives in the Panchayats. Our collaborator was the Institute of Management in Government (IMG) at Kochi. We distributed all the documentation on the women and tourism issue based on our campaigns in Kerala and Tamil Nadu through the 23 community based groups developed through our study on Kovalam and interaction with the government and the industry.

The Government saw tourism awareness being created through district level and site located tourism carnivals and festivals, which promoted tourism as a benefit for the development of the infrastructure, creating employment and creating jobs. On the other hand data indicated that of the \$2.8 million earned by Kerala tourism in foreign exchange, only 0.5% was retained by the state.

Secondly the tourism policy stressed numbers and not quality. When a survey of 150 households were undertaken, it was evident that only 305 persons out of the total population of 732 were engaged in earning activities in different sectors. When the agencies providing employment in the tourism sector were looked at, we found that out of the 73 persons engaged in tourism related activities, 51 (69%) were found to have switched over from traditional occupations. The number of persons employed under ITDC/KTDC were 27. It is noted that about 95% of the total employees in ITDC and KTDC hotels were working in unskilled and semiskilled categories. Higher posts requiring skilled personnel were filled in by outsiders, outside Kovalam as well as Kerala.

With a view to supply skilled personnel to Hotel Industry, a catering institute was established at Kovalam in September 1990. This institute offers Diploma Course in Hotel Management and Catering Technology and admits 120 students per year. Admission is based on a test conducted at National level. The number of local students admitted in this institution is practically nil.

Thirdly, we saw government incentives and financial support going to the large-scale sector, which had also tied up with foreign collaborators. 90% of TFCI funds were lent to the five star sectors and the export industry status was given to those who had a large turnover in foreign exchange. In this process, the local initiative and resources were being appropriated by the big developers, through large-scale projects and the community was being displaced.



(All tables are based on random sampling technique. Of the identified 1500 households 150 were chosen, keeping a ratio of 10:1)

Table 1.1

Income Vs Employment

Monthly Income Rs.	Agri-culture	Fishing	Coolie	Service	Tourism	Industry	Others
<1000	1	35	113	10	13	35	3
1000-2000	-	4	-	12	35	-	4
2000-3000	3	-	-	4	17	-	2
3000-4000	-	-	-	-	2	-	3
4000-5000	-	-	-	-	2	-	-
5000-6000	1	-	-	-	4	-	2
Total	5	39	113	26	73	35	14
% of workers in each sector	1.64	12.79	37.05	8.52	23.93	11.48	4.59

Table 1.2

Average income of sample households and workers

Type of activity	No. of families	Total Income in Rs.	Average Income in Rs.	Total no. of workers	Average income per worker in Rs.
Fishing + non tourism	14	18100	1293	28	646
Fishing + Tourism	11	22400	2036	23	974

Table 1.3

Work Participation Rate

	Population	Total Workers	Work Participation Rate	Work Participation in other works	Work Participation in tourism in Kovalam
Kerala	29,032,828	9,305,143	32.05%		
Trivandrum District	2,938,706	958,818	32.63%	474437 (16.14%)	
Trivandrum Rural	1,941,082	652,159	33.60%		
Kovalam	732	305	41.67%	*24.04%	9.97%

* Includes Tourism also



Table 1.4

Distribution of persons employed in tourism sector at Kovalam by income class

Monthly income (in Rs.)	Number of persons employed
<500	4
500 –1000	9
1000-1500	14
1500-2000	21
2000-2500	13
2500-3000	4
3000-3500	2
>3500	6
Total	73

Table 1.5

Average monthly income and the levels of distribution

	From total employment	From employment in tourism activity	From employment in Non-tourism activity
Arithmetic Mean	1024	1798	780
Co-efficient of Variation	85	49.22	90.71

Table 1.6

Distribution of persons provided with employment in tourism sector

No. of persons engaged in tourism	Male (Nos.)	Female (Nos.)	Self-Employed (Nos.)	No. employed under ITDC/KTDC	No. employed in privateSector
73	68	5	38	27	8
% wise distribution in each category	93.15	6.85	52.05	36.99	10.96



The women who participated in the workshop had the following opinions:

- 1) The Government was corrupt and imposing a market led economic model on the state.
- 2) The Peoples Plan was an instrument, which could influence tourism policy.
- 3) Economic growth does not bring gender justice unless gender is built into the design of the plan and its implementation.
- 4) Since 40% of the States budget is handed down to local government bodies, communities have to intervene at two levels, policy making and implementation.
- 5) Use Peoples Planning process to comment on the tourism project in your area. (here they gave the example of the anti-arrack movement).
- 6) After evaluation of the large-scale projects contemplated by the government they felt that tourism should not always be destructive and should not be resisted, but can be controlled, both by the community and the state.
- 7) To this end they demanded:
 - a) Greater role for women in decision making, at grass root level and not at the level of the state bureaucracy
 - b) Strict action against sex tourism
 - c) No use of women in the media to promote tourism (the Govt. advertisements had referred to Kerala women as a woman of substance.)
 - d) Attempt to develop gender sensitive indicators relating to employment and status of women in the developmental process, which should also be the yardstick for tourism projects.

Part III, Gender Responsiveness of Planning Process

Although the tourist volume is increasing in Kerala, the decline of Kovalam and the resistance to development in Bekal, conceived as a Special Tourism Area, indicated that there were two problems related to tourism development and expansion. Tourism had a high cost for the lowest level in the community and by the time tourism began to pay, outside interests entered the field. Governments were interested in volume to notch up targets and it was impossible to quantify the economic, social and cultural costs of tourism. This would involve time and skill inputs that did not exist either with the NGO sector or with the Government. The Data base for tourism is extremely unreliable and inconsistent. Multipliers are worked out without adjusting for leakage and costs either in human terms or in evaluating alternative developmental options.

The gender issue is now becoming critical, but the tourism issue remains outside the purview of the organised women's movement. Although the All India Democratic Women's Organisation had sent their secretary to participate, she was more concerned with violence against women and the prostitution issue is contentious since the women's organisations do not want to recognise women and children in prostitution as sex workers. They want a ban on prostitution. It is mainly the NGO sector that has been working in this field to organise sex workers and give them some rights.



We have identified the indicators, which should be the framework for a gender analysis of tourism projects, on the basis of which we organised a study of Mahabalipuram and a follow up workshop in the State of Tamil Nadu on the issue. This we consider to be essential for sustainability of women in the poorer sections of the local community, who have faced displacement, relocation, loss of traditional survival strategies and impoverishment.

We emphasised the need for a debate on Tourism Master Plans, which have to be publicised so that concerned and affected communities and households can be made aware of the changes being planned. This process is often ignored and once the government and industry have determined a plan and location they begin to acquire land and change land use laws to benefit the industry. They always promise jobs to local people and the only case we could come across was the Lakshwadeep project of the Casino Group. Since this is an island resort, it was perhaps cheaper to employ local staff and promote the property as a “Gulliver” experience.

Subsidies, tax incentives, charter flights and foreign investment in tourism projects is the approach of the government. No community, until the peoples plan movement, has ever thought to develop tourism either for domestic or international tourists, as their awareness of the needs and demands of tourists is completely zero. Even here the role of women need to be redefined since the development of tourism is from a male orientation. There is a big gap between the socio-cultural experience of the tourist and the local population. To the community tourism spells displacement, mechanised trawlers taking over fishing fields and violations of the Coastal Zone Regulations (Act of 1991), which has only been emphasised through NGO mobilisation of displaced communities.

At our tourism and women workshop the participants suggested:

- 1) Develop the right kind of tourism (farm tourism or eco tourism or backwater tourism). The focus should be on natural beauty and not five star facilities.
- 2) Promote grassroot tourism and concentrate on domestic misuse of tourist destinations as well as reorientation of mass tourism.
- 3) Since tourism policy is formulated at the Centre with representatives of industry, there must be space for NGO's or peoples representatives in this process.
- 4) Indian tourism should reflect the reality of our lives and should be developed in the way that benefits us. However, since 1982 this process is growing further away from us. Those who commercialise our assets and resources and show profits in foreign exchange are the beneficiaries of tourism development.
- 5) A follow up workshop should be planned where a dossier presenting the new developments in Kerala should be circulated and form the basis of discussion, so that women members of local bodies could then campaign on local tourism issues.



Part 4, Assessing the Experience: Lessons for the Future

Tourism, in Kerala, as elsewhere in India finds space for local people only in the informal sector. Although the Casino Group is owned by Keralites and runs a chain of resorts, it is a medium sized company, which has diverse business interests and cannot be considered typical of local enterprise. The informal sector includes self-employed, wage earners, family or household labour bound by diverse types of informal contracts. 94% of women in the workforce are in the informal sector, which has no protection for the work force and no legal or social benefits.

Tourism workers fall under the “industry and services” category. They should be protected under the following legislation: Industrial disputes Act, 1947; Factories Act, 1948; Shop and Establishment Act (state act); State Insurance Corporation Act; Provident Fund Act and the Bonus Act 1965.

Rural women, even when educated do not find employment in the organised sector, which in India accounts for 2.98% of women workers. The jobs available to them are laundry, petty trading, cooking, baby-sitting, street vending, massage and sexual services. Their traditional skills of housekeeping, entertaining and being hospitable are not used by the formal sector. As street vendors women are at the mercy of the police, whom they have to bribe to continue to have access to the street.

Women were concerned with changing values and inter-generational relationships as a result of tourism money entering the community. As the water and fuel gatherers in rural communities, they were concerned about the reduced access to these resources because of the demand of tourists. Plus, they were also concerned at the loss of their traditional activities like tobacco, coconut harvesting, coir yarn spinning, fish sorting and processing. All these activities were located at or near the beaches which were now being taken over by hoteliers. Tourism is therefore alternative employment since it has caused a loss of employment for women. They have to be retrained to find a tourism-related job in the organised sector.

We looked at the tea shop as a typical economic entry point because it is generally the first business to come up. It requires no capital investment and all travellers and tourists stop at the tea shop. 15 women were interviewed. Most tea shop owners (shops could be of varying sizes, from a small shack to a kiosk to a small restaurant -where larger, the man of the house interfaced with the customer while the women did the invisible work) felt that poverty had forced them onto the street. Husbands considered wives free labour. For women who were widowed or deserted, the teashop was a way to keep the family going. Many had lost jobs in construction, agriculture or other traditional economic activity.

Most teashops ran on a day to day financial system. Profit was appropriated by husbands or put to family use like buying a house site or adding to the nutritional component. Most of the shops were not established for a long time (in very few cases women have had their shops for upto than twenty years). The majority of women had secondary school education and spoke their mother tongue or pidgin. They had families of one to four children and lived in rented tenements. Many did not have electricity and water and lived in the most congested areas with poor infrastructure



to reduce their rent obligation and expenditure on transport. Most of them felt sorry that they had daughters, as they would be a financial burden on them. Most families accepted that women had to work. Many brought their small children to the shop with them and completed their household chores either before or after the shop opened or closed. All of them were traditional in their dress but outgoing in their behaviour with customers. Most of them were not worried about their safety and found the backpack type of tourist friendly to them. However they were unaware of mass tourism in the organised sector.

For tourism oriented businesses/projects in the informal sector to be gender sensitive should emphasise the following indicators:

- Training in management and finance
- Status and education / training
- Culture - tradition Vs modern economic needs
- Infrastructure
- Safety and security
- Tourism and related social and economic impacts
- Double burden - family work and income generation work

These would be presented at the next workshop to see if local bodies can develop special women friendly policies with regard to self employment and wage labour in the tourism sector.

The question, whether there was any improvement in general welfare due to tourism, had been answered positively by 51 and negatively by 99 respondents. The majority of the respondents found that there was little change in their living standard due to the development of tourism.

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Preliminary Study on Women and Tourism Issues - Mamallapuram

INTRODUCTION

Tamil Nadu is the major tourism destination in South India, with 17,214,953 domestic tourist and 5,85,751 foreign tourist arrivals (1995). The Tamil Nadu government is trying to double this figure by the year 2020. This legitimises the state's claim to intensive infrastructure development. Subsidies and tax holidays, both by the Central and State Governments, attract both national and international investments into the state. One area that the state plans to have these intensive developments is the coastal region. The other being the hill region.

As beaches are emerging to be new destinations in Indian tourism, Tamil Nadu's 1000-Km coastline with estuaries, backwaters and mangrove swamps is now being used to develop beach tourism and other water based recreational activities. This boom in beach tourism has led to hectic hotel construction activity with the Centre urging the State Government to help identify suitable land to accelerate the pace of hotel construction. With the coming up of the coastal highway - East Coast Road between Chennai and Kanyakumari, the coastal belt has witnessed sharp increases in the prices of land.

These developments are being done unmindful of the local people and the occupations they are involved in. The impacts of these developments on the environment and ecologically fragile regions are also not being attended to. Change in land use pattern and ownership, privatisation of common property, destruction of ecologically sensitive regions etc. are some of the direct impacts of mass tourism development. Employment to local communities, empowerment of women, overall development of the region, and rise in the standards of living of the people, do not seem to be the goals of current tourism development in Tamil Nadu.

Keeping these factors in mind that we decided to conduct an in-depth research in one of the full-blown tourist centers of Tamil Nadu. We chose the well-known Mamallapuram, which is a Special Tourism Area. The attempt is a preliminary study to locate areas and issues for future research.

DESCRIPTION OF STUDY AREA, PEOPLE

Mamallapuram lies on the coast of Bay of Bengal at a distance of 58 km. of south from Madras City. **Mamallapuram**, also known as Mahabalipuram is famous for its ancient monuments. Now, this township comes under the **Special Tourism Area** category. The Mamallapuram Township is constituted as a Health Resort in 1964 with the area namely Mamallapuram village Panchayat and Poonjeri Village Panchayat within the limit of Thirukalikundram Panchayat Union. This Township is called as "Panchayat Township". Apart from this the development authority called Mamallapuram New Town Development Authority has been constituted exclusively for Mamallapuram Township, comprising of Mamallapuram and Poonjeri Revenue Village¹.

This temple town, which has attracted a large number of travellers in the past has undergone a series of drastic changes in the way it is at present being promoted for tourism. In this study, we have attempted to look at the impact of tourism development in general and women's participation



in tourism activities in particular.

Our survey area was limited to a distance of one kilometer around the main bus stand, the centre of most tourist activity. This area includes the panchayat office, a government run middle school, curio shops, sculpturing units, restaurants, lodges and dhabas, kiosks, liquor shops, travel agencies and a taxi stand. There are several lanes and bylanes in this area, which are not completely residential as some of the houses also function as lodges.

For the purpose of gathering information we had chosen a cross section of people to interview. The interviews were conducted mostly at their workplace. The respondents include women, children and men who are directly involved in tourism. We also interviewed people from the same sections of society who were not involved in tourism related activities. Although an interview schedule was prepared while planning for the survey, we did not use any questionnaires to gather information. The interviews were in the manner of informal free flowing conversations and discussions.

The total number of people we interviewed for the purpose of this study was 18, which included 6 women, 9 men and 3 children. They were involved in tourism related activities like running or working in restaurants/dhabas, curios shop owners, roadside vendors, taxi drivers or involved in stone carving or selling of trinkets. The non-tourist related people include politicians, government employees, teachers, domestic workers and housewives. We also spoke with people of the area to gather general information and also their opinion.

OBJECTIVES

- *To get an understanding of the opportunities that the tourism sector has to offer to the local people in Mammallapuram*
- *To look at the socio-cultural and economic effects of tourism on women and children*
- *To identify areas for further detailed research*

METHODOLOGY

The methodology we opted was:

- *Unstructured interviews but based on a broad questionnaire*

THE STUDY AREA

- *One Kilometer radius of the Mammallapuram town centre where most tourist activities are located*

TARGET GROUP INTERVIEWED

- *Women, Children and men directly involved in tourism and related activities*
- *Women, Children and men not directly involved but living in the tourist area*
- *Informed section of people like teachers, politicians, Government employees etc.*



REPORTING

The study was meant to gather first hand information on the identified objectives. By keeping the interviews unstructured we were able to gather varied experiences and emotions of the people. It in accordance with this that the report is written and presented. We have taken the narratives from the case studies. Our understanding is that this report shall evoke further in-depth, detailed and structured research.

SOCIAL BENEFITS

Infrastructure

While looking at social benefits of tourism to the local people in relation to infrastructure facilities available, the services we focussed our attention were roads, medical facilities, banking water and sanitation.

Roads

Mahabalipuram has a well-connected network of roads. The Asian Development Bank funded East Coast Road runs through Mamallapuram. This coastal highway provides easy access to this temple town. Mamallapuram can also be reached from Madras (via) Kelambakkam and Kovalam (60Kms), (via) Thirupporur (66 Kms), and Via Chengalpattu and Thirukalikundram (85 Kms.). The drive from Chennai takes about three-fourths of an hour. Apart from the private buses to Mamallapuram, buses to Pondicherry and other places ply via this route. As the area of this town is only 12.85 Sq.km, one does not require other modes of transport within the town. Autos and taxis are available.

Medical Services

Mammallapuram township has no proper government hospitals but only a primary health centre and a maternity centre. We noticed a few privately run clinics too.

Banks

There is an Indian Overseas Bank. A Foreign Exchange section has been recently opened.

Water and Sanitation

Earlier the township faced scarcity of water but now unlike other tourist centres, the water situation here is comparatively tolerable. Plastic tanks are placed at different locations, mainly provides water for the tourists. Hand pumps are also there. The small restaurants and shops located on the way to the shore temple and beach are not provided with water. We were told that each of the shopkeepers collect water from the water tanks for drinking and cooking purposes. As households are also not provided with water, they also fetch water from the public taps or pump water from their backyards by using pump sets.

There are no proper sanitary facilities. Apart from a pay and use toilet near the bus stand, which is mainly used by tourists, there are no other such facilities around this area. Local people mostly use open spaces, usually after dusk.



ECONOMIC IMPACTS

Occupations

The local people were traditionally involved in fishing, agriculture and belonging to a shore temple village, in sculpture making too. It was not the intention of this study to go into details of the various communities and their activities. We have had discussions with individuals hailing from different backgrounds. There seemed to be a clear shift-taking place between generations. While the older generation still tries desperately on to their traditional occupations, the younger generation seemed to prefer to move away from the traditional occupation to jobs that would fetch them an easy income.

Employment

The employment scene seems quite bleak in Mamallapuram. A lot of men and women have taken up jobs in factories in the nearby places. They are picked up by buses early in the morning and dropped back in the evening.

As a tourist centre, a lot of activity revolves around tourism. People have started small lodges, restaurants, handicraft shops and travel agencies. Others have taken to becoming guides, drivers and selling trinkets. As tourism is seasonal, dependency on tourism is heavy. The revenue earned out of tourism is very low for those in the informal sector. They also have to compete with outsiders. The money earned each day seems to be just enough to provide the needs of that day. Most of the people we spoke to were in debt. They borrow money to have their business going for that day and at the end of the day repay it with interest. The little money that remains goes to meeting the needs of the family. We were informed that tourism during the past two years was comparatively low and thus most of them have made losses on their business that is reliant on tourism. Other than those locals who run businesses here, there are outsiders who have their handicrafts and souvenir shops. In the wake of a low tourist turnout, the outsiders were planning to close down and return only when the tourist inflow picks up. These people also seem to be a threat to the locals.

As we walk down the streets, one would find children, young and old men selling their items to foreigners. Varying degrees of friendliness marks the interaction between the locals selling their goods to foreign and domestic tourists. With foreigners they show more respect and warmth. This, according to them, is because the foreigners themselves are more open. With a few cases of long time friendships maintained over many years.

The Government Sculpture Training and Architecture College trains several of the local young men every year. Most of them find employment at the sculpture making centres. They are paid depending on the kind of piece they are working on. Each of these centres employs around eight to ten persons. The artisans informed us that they did not depend upon tourism for their income. Most of them are involved in the export business and have contracts with a lot of establishments outside of Mamallapuram. We were also told that the international tourists were interested in buying these items but had difficulties in carrying these items back to their countries. The artifacts were too expensive for the domestic tourists who would buy very small items, which are low priced. In short, tourists of either category did not form clientele for the sculpturing business.

It was interesting to note that the people were very clear that they could not depend upon tourism



alone for their income. Some of them who were at the lower income end took to jobs like becoming labourers at the construction sites. Others did not particularly inform us about their other mode of income but did tell us that they were engaged in other activities.

The locals also pointed out that the Government did not provide any support for their small undertakings. The benefits that come to the local people are very low, as there are outsiders at every level.

Women's employment in tourism is mostly confined to the kitchens of small dhabas and eating-places. They are also roadside vendors selling snacks and other odds and ends. The children who are mostly school dropouts sell trinkets.

SOCIAL IMPACTS:

Values

Most people we interviewed spoke about a change in the value system. Many stressed that it is the consumerist values that thrive and possession of 'money' is what matters in the society. People who have come from outside and have now settled in Mamallapuram feel that the place is no longer the same compared to ten years ago. They see a change of attitude among the local people. According to them, Mamallapuram was a nice little place earlier and the local population was much simpler and friendlier. The grip of consumerism over the local people is evident and has been mentioned by the people we met. According to these neo-settlers, the locals even take to cheating the tourists.

Traditionally women's role was confined to the family. There seem to be a change in this perception. Those who have taken to tourist activities, though not by choice, feel that social stigmas are to be ignored. Working till odd hours or mingling with strangers are seen as part of their struggle for survival. This attitude is prevalent among the people who are dependent on tourism. We have come across some women who are running restaurants. Although there are a few women in restaurants and dhabas who contribute to the family income the society does not recognise their role but attaches a stigma and expressed disapproval in many subtle ways.

Parental control over children who are in tourism appear to be less as many children are economically independent and their families needing their earnings. Both children and parents expressed this fact about declining parental control. We have mothers complaining about not being able to control their growing up daughters. Children talked about how parents cannot have their say as they (parents) are dependent on their earnings. They said that parents sometimes disapprove of their friendships (especially for girls with the opposite sex) and activities. It seems parents do not disapprove of their children's associations with foreigners as much as they do in the case of locals. Parents also do not have much say in the spending habits of their earning children.

Status

We noticed that most people who are in the informal sector of tourism live in almost poverty like situations. People are constantly in debts. Earnings from a season are used for paying debts. They could hardly make both ends meet. Most children do not study even up to High School. There are many school dropout children in the area. The parents of those who complete schooling find it



hard to send their children for even type writing or computer courses. There are no colleges nearby other than the Sculpture College. A number of children are working with the sculptors.

Perceptions about each other

Women whose families are not engaged in tourism related activities look down upon the women working in tourism sector. The former looks at the latter with suspicion and considers them immoral. One woman outside of tourist activity expressed the sentiment that she would rather be hungry than lose character by taking up a job where she has to deal with tourists. But she does not mind her menfolk taking up a job within tourism sector. (Her husband is a construction labourer). We also came across people who are not too happy associating with their relatives who are running a small restaurant for foreign tourists. Although they believe that tourism can bring in prosperity to the area they were not willing to approve of their relatives' means of livelihood. Whereas the ones who are in the restaurant business feel helpless as they do not have any other means of income. It was also a revelation that it was difficult for girls of Mamallapuram to get grooms, although only a few people came out with this fact openly. We were told that such stigma exists in the job market as well. It seems that a girl who had worked in the informal sector of tourism would find it difficult to get a job outside Mamallapuram for the fact that she had done a 'tourism job' earlier.

Matrimonial alliances

There are increasing incidences of foreigners marrying locals. This trend has started in the recent past, as recent as about five years ago. Already there are about 7-8 cases of foreigners marrying local women. The number of men married to foreign women is about three or four. We have also met people who are planning to marry or are engaged to foreign women. Invariably all the women married to foreigners are from very poor families who would otherwise find it difficult to get married paying large sums of dowry. Foreigners coming with the intention of marrying local women approach the family when they identify a woman who they think would fit their preconceived ideas. Negotiations for marriage start with the help of an interpreter, as there are often problems related to communication. Majority of the white men married to local women are either 'mentally or physically handicapped'. A few of these marriages seem to be working so as to say that the man regularly sends home some money, or does something for the family (house renovation), or have offspring, or take them for a visit to his home country etc. But in majority of the cases these marriages are not working even by the above indicators.

Another feature of these marriages is that the visits of these husbands coincide with the tourist season.

Land and property issues are involved with the marriage of foreigners with locals. Apparently, we are told that the foreign spouse buys up land in the name of the local spouse in the surroundings of this tourist area.

Safety

Women / or whose family are engaged in tourism feel safe to be out in the evenings. On the other hand women who are not part of tourism say that they wouldn't feel comfortable moving around the place after it is dark. They would venture out only with their husband or any male member of their family.

Tourists generally feel safe in Mamallapuram. As far as women tourists are concerned we were told that curio shop owners who are not locals often harass them.



Dowry

Dowry is a social problem in the area. We have not got enough data to say whether the problem is specific to some communities or common to all. The dowry rates amongst the poor are in the range of Rs 20,000/- - Rs. 50,000/-. It has also been pointed out that dowry is an important factor why hapless parents are willing to get their daughters married to disabled alien men. There is no objection to the practice of dowry but people only try to find ways to meet the demands.

Interaction

Those who are directly involved in tourism said that the foreigners are more friendly when compared to domestic tourists. A girl child in tourism said that she makes a lot of foreign friends. The domestic tourists, according to her had a lot of inhibitions in mingling with persons like her.

People who are not connected to tourism said that they did not have any interaction with the tourists. For most people we met, tourists meant foreigners. They think white tourists come merely to see their stone temples and carvings.

TOURISM AND PROSTITUTION IN MAMALLAPURAM

Mahabalipuram as a tourist centre is notorious for its sex trade. Women involved in the organised sex trade are not from Mamallapuram itself, but from nearby areas. The sex trade here caters mainly to the domestic tourists and to a certain extent to the foreign male tourists. There have been many attempts from the local governing body to control prostitution. The authorities claim that it is under controlled. There are about 30-35 hotels and lodges in Mamallapuram. A recent study conducted by Stella Maris College, Chennai points the linkages between hotels, lodges and prostitution in Mamallapuram.

The authorities also agreed that there was rampant child prostitution in the area a year or two ago. They attributed this to white male tourists, especially those from Germany and the Netherlands. The authorities and the local leaders have taken direct action against many of them. The authorities say that it is very much under control even though they cannot rule out its existence. The abused children were mainly those in the informal sector.

CHILD LABOUR

Like most tourist centers, tourism industry in Mammallapuram also employ child labour. We noticed that children employed here are mainly in the sculpturing units, restaurants and as well as in the informal sector. The children are mostly from poor families of the township and are dropouts from schools.

DRUG PEDDLING

Mammallapuram is also a centre for drug pushing and peddlers. This is characteristic of all beach tourism centers. Of course it is hard to collect data on this dangerous activity. But a petty trader informed us that drugs were an important item Mamallapuram offered to tourists.



OUR OBSERVATIONS

Traditionally the people of Mammallapuram followed occupations like fishing, agriculture and sculpturing. Employment opportunities in tourism sector at Mammallapuram are limited. A large number of men and women from Mahabalipuram go to nearby areas to work in the factories there. People dependent on tourism are mainly employed in small lodges, a few hotels, handicraft shops and travel agencies. Then there are other jobs like that of guides, drivers, petty traders and trinket sellers. Tourism is seasonal in this coastal area and people have to look for alternative employment during other times. Domestic tourists do not spend much time or money in Mahabalipuram. Even in tourist season the revenue earned out of tourism in the unorganised sector is low. People are constantly in debt and exist on the basis of the day to day earnings. People very clearly stated that they could not entirely depend on tourism.

Women's participation in the tourism activity is limited to the jobs, which the informal sector can offer. They work mainly to support their family and in certain cases are sole breadwinners. There is neither regulation nor job security. Tourism cannot support all women in Mammallapuram, many work in factories outside. Women in the tourism sector are not respected by society at large. Mahabalipuram did not have facilities for higher education except for a vocational college of Sculpturing.

The largest hotel chain in Mahabalipuram does not employ any woman as a rule. They are only willing to make a shift in their policy in the case of trained professional women from outside. Incidences of marriages between local women and foreigners are becoming common. The marriages are also linked to property and land ownership by foreigners.

CONCLUSION

Tourism as a development model in general has not benefited the common people at Mammallapuram. Its ability to provide employment, social security and raise the standard of living of the local people is yet to materialise here. Local women carry all the negative impacts that is characteristic to other mass tourism centers in the country. Children also face the same fate.

FACTORS IDENTIFIED FOR FURTHER RESEARCH/ INVESTIGATION

1. Statistical data on the area, people and community
2. Employment opportunities in tourism and non-tourism, tourism employment – resultant social and economic dynamics
3. Social and economic impacts of change in land use patterns and its effect on women
4. Comparative analysis between women employed in tourism sector vs those in the traditional sector.
5. Nexus between Tourism and Child Sexual Abuse and Adult Prostitution
6. Nutritional and health status of the local community in Mahabalipuram
7. Linkages between tourism as a modern industry and its influence on social and moral fabric of local people.

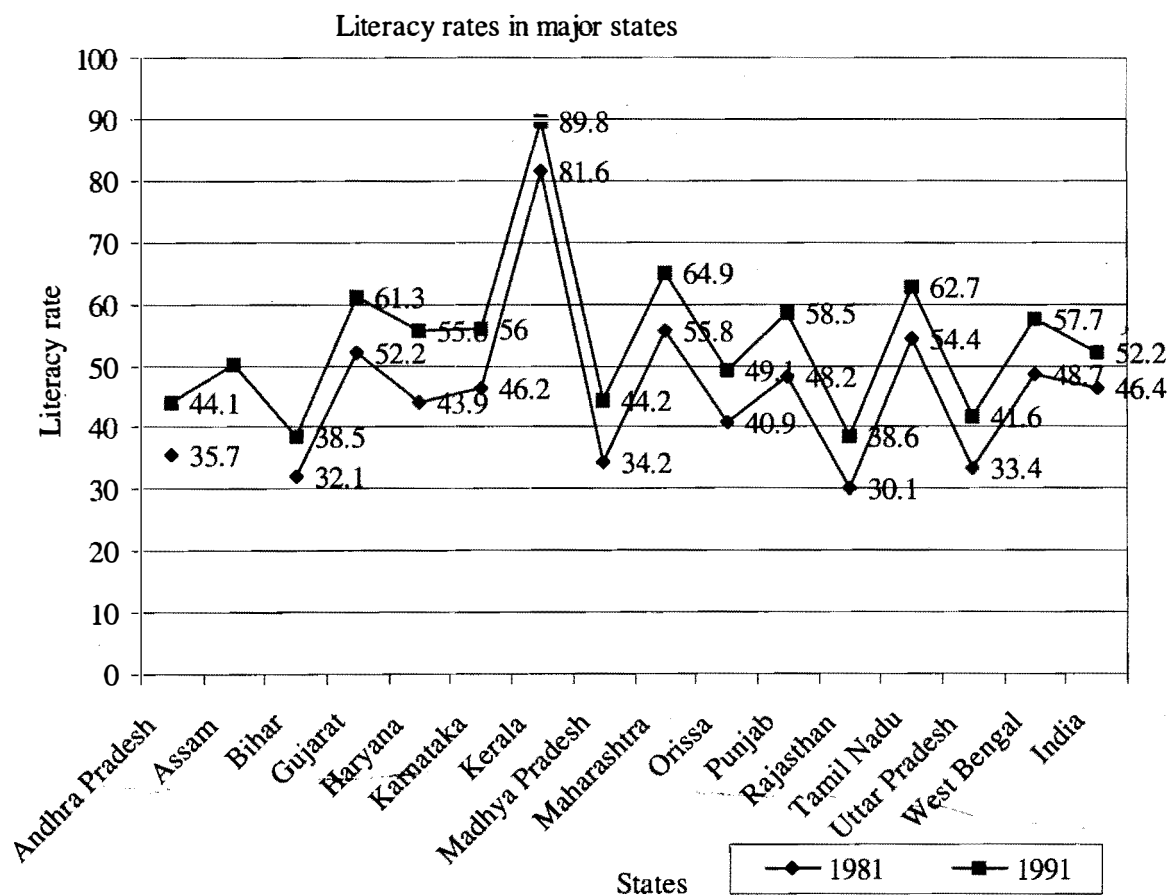


8. Women's participation/involvement in decision making at the local level
9. A gender perspective of the roles played by women in tourism.
10. Effect of tourism development in at and around Mahabalipuram.
11. Probe whether tourism offers better prospects to local community in the light of our findings about the current situation.

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Study was done by EQUATIONS
August 1999



Source: Census, 1981 and 1991

N.B.: No census was conducted in Assam in 1981



TOURISM AND GENDER – SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FOR MOUNTAIN WOMEN?

To understand the impact of tourism on women it is necessary to be familiar with the debate on the use of the term gender. The term gender signifies the 'system of cultural identities and social relationships between females and males' (Swain 1995) and the term is therefore significantly different from the biological difference between female and male. In third world countries indigenous and political ideologies influence the perceptions, roles and relations between men and women, which then determine their social characteristics. Most tourism development studies are optimistic about the participation of women in tourism-related activity and employment but even this optimism is coloured by a gender bias. Most of these studies identify women as being socialised to be sensitive to the needs of others because they are coping with their reproductive roles even, as they cope with earning an income, generally considered supplementary to the income of the male members of the family. There is a clear distinction not only in defining tasks as feminine but also in giving decision-making power, based on ownership and economic activity, to women. The biological-functional view predominates in such ideologies. This view takes advantage of the fact that women in third world countries, particularly in backward regions have a significantly lower level of literacy. Lack of knowledge then legitimises a woman's place in a patriarchal value system.

The Women in Development approaches, which aim to enhance the participation and role of women in development projects, which is often the case with tourism in mountain regions, attempt to place women as community managers and economic producers, without noticing the tension that such role play involves for women who are also responsible, as the ones who nurture, prepare and present items of daily life and ritual. This indicates that women do not function as leaders, they are implementers of tradition. An example is the issue of village water supply, which becomes important since tourism is a water intensive activity. In the mountains water is generally carried to the point of use. Women are supposed to be merely carriers of water since they have no technical training and any decision on the use of water and method of its collection and carriage is decided by men; women implement such decisions. Similarly, women who have a certain economic autonomy in the informal sector lose this autonomy in the developmental process which tries to bring women into the formal economy, resulting in the introduction of male control in areas which had been a female preserve. Their mobility and location is thus determined by the indigenous and political ideology, which is gendered. Many have critiqued the pressure of development approaches to bring women who operate in the informal sector into the formal sector as an euro-centric, since European economies do not depend so much on the informal sector. In the case of tourism however the bed and breakfast business remains in the informal sector in many parts of the world, where women dominate. It is interesting to see that women do feel erosion of their position as tourism grows and enforces international standards the world over.

The reason for looking at the issue of women and tourism in this perspective is to recognise that gender is a significant variable in any human relationship, and much more so in the relation between a woman or women as members of a 'host' community, and tourists. As a third world activist and scholar I am interested in exploring local and global gender relations in the process of tourism



activity as it takes place in an intercultural encounter. Therefore this paper will discuss the variable of gender as mediated by characteristics like class, race, ethnicity and nationality. While looking at the nature of tourism impacts on mountain women we are again moving into a complex and variegated field. Mountain areas, even within a political or administrative boundary, have cultural identities that change from one valley to another and the status or the relations between male and female reflect such changes. Development theory recognises only common generalisations that have an impact on the lifestyle and life processes in the mountains without distinguishing cultural identities and social relationships. For example, the sexual freedom enjoyed by some women in areas of Spiti may not be socially acceptable to women in Nepalese mountain areas, or in a specific region where tourism is to be developed. Again sexual relations between such women and tourists or the industry that supports tourism are quite different to sex tourism as promoted in Thailand. Interestingly, once Japanese women began to emerge as a significant market the Thai sex tourism trade began to take steps to cover up the attraction of Thai brothels for Japanese men. European women on the other hand felt secure with the idea of men letting down norms with prostitutes or foreign women rather than a mistress at home.

Given that tourism is a distinct form of consumerism, being a part of leisure time and involving the exercise of a quest for an experience which can be unique and extraordinary, we can see that tourism has a political structure that reflects class and the global economic hierarchy. The receiving community responds to this quest by manipulating experiences for the visitor according to the ideological, features of western culture. It is interesting to note that Caribbean women are used as an exotic marker to promote beach tourism by being photographed nude, to enthrall German visitors and such a representation is taken as meaningful for the tourists.

We know that tourism proceeds from gendered societies to gendered societies; that such gendering has taken place over time and through the interplay of economic, political, social, cultural and environmental dimensions; that control, power and equality are issues that cannot be discussed without looking at the role of class and race in constructing gender. Whilst most gender studies look at these issues within the systems of patriarchy and capitalism, in India we see the problem as one of the very survival of women. The increase in both family and societal violence against women has not been decreased by tourism development.

In most case studies relating to mountain tourism and the role of women, tourism has been looked at as a benefit in economic, sociocultural and environmental terms. Nowhere have these studies shown that employment in tourism is not gender stereo-typed or falling outside of the international division of labour where no new economic or income earning opportunities are availed of by women. The interesting aspect of tourism development is that it has exploited the productivity of women without conferring ownership rights to them. Income generation is seen as supplementary to ownership and income alone does not confer status to those who are running a lodge or cooking and cleaning for tourists. In class as well as gender terms there is no change or personal development for women because tourists are seen as belonging to a better social category than those serving them and their economic power perpetuates this relationship over time, since the women employed in tourism cannot become tourists to the countries from where their customers have come. Tourism retains the norms of what we have seen defined as women's work (M Thea Sinclair, 1996). In a case study of women in the Garhwal region of India Rana (EPW, May 1996) has shown that



despite the increasing productivity of women agriculturists their status has not improved because they do not have land rights.

Most mountain tourism is characterised by home stay in the private sector and by government accommodation in the formal sector. In both cases there is a clear gender bias. In the former case family ownership and operation is the basis for low cost. Most of the day to day work is provided by women, belonging to the family or hired locally. The marketing and management decisions are taken by the male head of the household or other male members. Sons often have more clout than older sisters and mothers or grandmothers. In the government sector, given the status of being a government servant, even work defined as female is done by men, like cooking, cleaning and serving. As tourism grows and the number of visitors increases, the work load of the women also increases without their personal responsibility decreasing. Policy makers, by giving incentives to hotels and foreign investors are once again bringing the informal sector within the formal sector and denying women their space in the hill districts.

Similarly, in the handicrafts industry the number of hours worked between male and female members of the family do not give the women the right to manage and market production, nor do they have access to the income for any other uses. This indicates that even though tourism does offer opportunities for income and employment, it does not transform the fundamental relationship between male and female members of the household and the community. It is abandoned women or women headed households where we find there has been a change in the situation, since there is no male control. In Asian countries women are involved in the retail sector but no studies have followed up the use and retention of money by women from retailing activity.

We can also see that in tourism the traditional out migration of men, their role as porters and their role in agriculture are extended to guiding, boating, riding etc., is a representation of their greater strength and social position. Women are seen as being good at routine jobs, particularly serving, where their feminine attractiveness is an advantage. In tourism services many employers select uniforms and make up to enhance the attractiveness of female employees and demand that they encourage the flirtatious advances of the customer. Men do not have any barriers to mobility and can migrate from their home villages to access employment in tourism wherever the project is located. Young, unmarried women can have such access only when their male decision makers allow their participation and at marriage the husband would demand their presence at home. The proportion of men and women in the workforce as well as their representation in the hierarchy of tasks is determined by gender ideologies, both local and national. Research shows that tourism, like other economic activity only masks the determining role of gender in employment and does not bring about any radical societal change, as is often claimed by policy makers.

Tourism development, through demonstration and through changes in value systems or family systems is said to promote modernity through the guest host interaction, rather than promoting otherness. In this perspective it might be interesting to see that an increase in women headed households due to the out migration of men or the traditional male occupation of portage which leads to the transfer of economic power to a younger generation. There is also the desire for urbanisation in rural societies since it is assumed that urban women have more freedom. This need not be the desired fruit of modernity. These 'benefits' are however the trend in western



cultures. Similarly, cultural, racial and moral differences continue to play a role in the way in which marginal or subordinate racial groups (adivasis), cultures and sexualities are defined and constructed as 'others' in relation to the privileged categories, like upper castes or western tourists or high spending tourists.

There are several contestable assumptions in the pro-tourism debate. These can be briefly summarised in the following way: that male experience is universal, including the North as Male and the South as female. That women are to be judged by male standards which are universal, that male biological superiority is a model that is not necessarily oppressive; that being women centred is a divisive issue, and that both male and female experiences are mediated by other characteristics and can not be looked at as contradictory. (Swain 1995). Concerned research has shown that Woman centred field work has on the other hand opened up not only the tourism debate but also the disciplines which have now been associated with social and cultural studies and brought new insights to the question of exercising the tourism option. In the Himalayan region we have to take up the assumption of the modernity of the modern sector and the backwardness of the traditional sector. It is in this context we have to locate an analysis of issues like unemployment, poverty, conflict between castes, religious sects, tribes, regions and women. Added to this are the conditionalities of the globalisation processes that tourism demands in terms of minimum international standards. We can look at these contradictions in the following way:

1. Direct intervention by state or NGO sponsored development in the form of development plans and foreign exchange earnings for communities who have to be brought out of backwardness and poverty. In such planning the role and participation of women is considered critical to the success of the project and the whole community is educated to allow women to play their part. Eco Tourism and conservation give an important place to women, but in their gendered position. Income is the blindfold and most women would bite this option because as nurturers they have to find the supplementary income as a survival strategy.
2. Impoverishment leading to anti-elite conflicts as can be seen in the expansion of tourism facilities in the hill areas which is being resisted by the local people, for example the Spiti Tourism Society which opposes the state governments proposal to build a three star hotel in Spiti even if it means forgoing the Rs.30crore investment.
3. Economic poverty and distress used by fundamentalist forces who identify one major enemy, as has happened in Kashmir, with the pro-Islamic militancy movement attacking tourists and destroying the households dependent on tourism, to carry the fight against the Indian state to all fronts.
4. Competition for direct foreign investments leading to secessionist movements, as in the case of a separate state of Uttarakhand including the hill areas of Uttar Pradesh which has to depend on tourism for economic development. Here, women would be agents of the desired changes, since tourism is a low paid and low skilled employment area.
5. Unemployment and food insecurity which cause the backward regions to want to secede and the nation state becomes too weak to intervene, as we have seen in the case of several



militant movements in the North East, all of whom see tourism as the source of foreign exchange needed to catch up with the advanced regions of the country. Women are again the agents, not only for cooking and serving, but also for agricultural support and handicraft production, which are the mainstays of tourism in such regions.

In all these cases women have played a militant role whether political, military or economic but they have also been subjected to gendered punishment in the form of molestation, rape and widowhood.

Tourism development also raises environmental issues, and the gender perspective is important, since women are generally the fuel, water and resource gatherers in the mountains, where the cost of many of the items for cooking and cleaning are high. In Ladakh it is the women who negotiate with the army for low cost kerosene supplies and the army quota of rum and petrol, since firewood is in short supply and the high altitude makes cooking time for non-Ladakhi food much longer. In return, women operate bars where the soldiers come to drink the rum they sold at a higher price for the company of women, since they are separated from their families. Development planners do not consider the impact on the community of women when redesigning the planning process. They take for granted the ability of women to develop survival strategies in the most demanding situations.

In the modern period of tourism development, the discovery motif has been a dominant symbol of tourism to the east. The discovery motif represents the discovered land as an empty space on which linguistic, cultural and eventually territorial claims can be made, much like the colonisers of the past. Hill tourism is a British development in which a series of hill stations were developed in the four Presidency areas with the latest technology and as urban centres to cater to the needs of the English families resident in India. There, was no relationship between the life and the culture of the local people and the colonialists who appropriated their land and resources.

By drawing on the motif of discovery the travel writer/tour operator can lay a claim to new knowledge, which is then processed and circulated via the binarisms that race and nationality endow on the privileged discoverer. This is a kind of self-inscription on to the lives of the people at the tourist destination, who are conceived of as an extension of the landscape. The gendering of tourism rests on the colonial functions of civilising rescuing, idealising and demonising Indian subjects as the other. The Indian upper class is also co-opted into taking a similar position. Western civilisation and its native clone are superior to the backward and primitive cultures of the back regions where tourism has located its spirit of adventure. The rescue scenario states that Indian women are to be saved from their backward social institutions and their character and lives improved according to western liberalism; the woman question has been an important marker in the colonial discourse and became the distinguishing characteristic between the modern west and the backward east. It was believed that native women led devalued lives whilst their European sisters led a supposedly superior existence. Women became mute but central characters in the dialogue between western and Indian men. Modern or traditional the qualities of virtue, fidelity and subservience were desirable in women. They were thus ideal for the service or hospitality trade as long as they were kept from mingling freely with male customers. (Singh 1996).



An important aspect of gender in tourism is the opportunity for sexual encounters with local women who are located in a liminal space, outside the domestic sphere and inhabiting the location of the recreational space. Contemporary tourist, not unlike their predecessors, and modern planners, in their reformist zeal, have not included the reappraisal of the status and rights of women in their new agency. Who is being rescued in such an enterprise? We have seen that tourism is rescuing the male controlled and structured social and cultural relations that different production systems in the mountains have created. (Stephen, 1992)

If this was not the case we would not have had tourists on treks photographing nude hill women for a dollar fee, since these women have the responsibility of keeping the money-order economy going without the right to earn a money income from other sources, which are denied to them by the hierarchy of tasks that apply to tourism as well. Drug peddlers have also used male control of the social role of women by paying the male head of the family to allow them a live-in hill woman as a cover for their procurement of drugs along well established circuits in the Himalayas. Hill women have always been projected as fair and beautiful, fit subjects of an oriental idyll, and like other native women full of pure passion for their western lovers. The post 1857 novels are replete with such stories, where these illicit liaisons are concluded by the death of the native woman. The white lover is absolved of guilt and returns to the bosom of the home cultural values. (Singh, 1996.) Is modern tourism discovering such delights in the Himalayas too?

In conclusion I would like to point out that tourism projects have made no difference to several indicators that determine the status of women in the hill states as a look at the Census of India Report 1991 shows. These are problems like the declining sex ratio, adult illiteracy, infant mortality rate and infanticide, life expectancy and birth rate. Access to health and nutrition have also not been studied. The age of marriage (as an institution conferring status on women) has also not been strictly adhered to for girls, who have to be watched as long as they are single so that they do not bring dishonour to the family violence against women like rape of minors and dowry deaths are on the increase.

Women's awareness about themselves and their society are also not very different. Every society identifies the use of consumer items as an indicator of social progress, for example, the use of foot wear, reading a newspaper, using mill made cloth or cosmetics. In all these areas women are still lagging behind the progress made by men. Watches, clocks and radios are also favoured items of consumption, and men are again ahead in such consumption. Traditional food is also an area where men have diverted to the changes that multiculturalism has introduced. This imbalance is reflected in language skills as well. As researchers in the field of women and tourism development we have often wondered why the field studies remain at the level of income and employment. Have we not been swayed by the predominant ideology of tourism as a blessing? As we accept and internalise models created in completely different circumstances, are we not closing our eyes to the fundamental gender issues that confront women in mountain communities?

Nina Rao

*(Undated material from EQUATIONS
documentation centre)*



CRIME ON THE BEACH

[The North Goa tourism belt is crime-ridden. Theft, extortion and rape are common on the beaches of Goa. This has been a consequence of the ineffectiveness of the police and the saturation, of Goa's decade-old charter tourism, writes Frederick Noronha]

No girls should feel safe! Stick to the main roads, avoid dirt tracks, and when in your house, make sure that all windows and doors are locked. (The police) have no idea of the amount of rapes (of foreign tourists) in Goa... take care! Spread the word." - This is from a pamphlet titled "Rape Alert", displayed by Western tourists at a Goa beachside restaurants.

If you're one of the 30,000 odd foreign tourists visiting Goa at this time of the year, you might run into this notice pinned on thatched walls of the "Goodluck" beach-shack restaurant on the sands of Baga beach. Last fortnight, the Goa police took the problem of rising beach-crime seriously, as never before. But this came after two young Swedish women were gang raped by seven to eight men at Anjuna, the Mecca of backpack and hippy tourists in South Asia. They were returning home after a late night beach-party. Their bike was stopped by assailants armed with sticks and knives. A male companion was forced at knife-point to witness the gang-rape. All were robbed of money and possession.

But this case, which sent the local police into a dizzy, is only the shocking tip of a long-ignored iceberg. Crime is turning into the new growth of industry along parts of the North Goa beach belt. It is coming in alongside prosperity brought in by the booming tourism sector there over the past decade.

Everyone seems to think the Western tourist's affluence is out for grabs. Literally. Constable Digambar Naik was weeks ago suspended over the theft of 500 pound sterling from the baggage of two Britons at Goa's airport. Last month, Panaji police nabbed two Gujaratis for stealing the belongings of foreigners travelling to Goa by bus. Many crimes go unreported. But recorded crimes indicate the range: Anndhra-Goa gangbusted while looting foreign tourists in the Calangute-Anjuna belt last April. A Briton was nabbed trying to collect Rs 3.5 million worth of cocaine posted from Colombia. Extortion cases by criminals and, if one believes the tourists, even by men in uniform.

Some support for this view comes from strange quarters: the local leader of Bal Thackeray's Shiv Sena, local Sena village leader Camilo D'Souza, some time back, wrote to chief minister Pratapsing Rane warning him about theft, housebreaking and extortion taking root in the capital of hippy-Goa. "Unidentified persons posing as policemen have been collecting huge amounts from tourists as 'baksheesh'," D'Souza added.

Goa Inspector-General of Police PRS Brar points to the speedy police action on arresting suspects in the Swede gangrape case. He dismisses the view that other crime often directed against foreign tourists is growing fast, "If you wear a diamond ring and leave it on the dressing table, which police can stop it from being stolen," asks Brar.

But real life can be more bizarre. One year back, a group of local boys, allegedly playing nude on the Sinkerim beach, tried to molest a foreigner while she was fishing. Local youngsters have



gone on rampages against Kashmiri vendors, resettled in the area, using any pretext to grab their goods, this correspondent was told by reliable quarters.

Statistics recently blew the lid to indicate that something was going drastically wrong. Figures revealed that in the 1995-96 tourist season, over two dozen foreign tourists had died in Goa, in a spell of under six months. Nearly 13 had died of overdoses of narcotics or liquor.

"Leave aside the tourists, even fisherfolk in Calangute, who once slept soundly on the shore, are afraid of moving about in their own land," says village parish priest Fr. Jose Dias. "This is frustration. There's no money any longer in tourism (in Goa, compared to the past few years)", reasons Jude Miranda, whose family runs a pay-phone booth and stores at Baga, frequented by foreign tourists. Clearly, the downswing some see overtaking Goa's decade-old charter tourism sector is breeding desperation. Besides, too many businesses have opened up, bringing in more to fight over the pie.

In one case, for instance, tourist-taxi operators beat up a Kashmiri vendor because they felt he was undercutting them. Some bus tour-operators have recently complained that their passengers are being coerced into eating at certain restaurants. In the Calangute police station, this correspondent met a European woman tourist complaining that the lodge owner was compelling her to stay on longer than she wished, threatening to hold back her possessions otherwise.

There are other hints to show that it's no longer just business as usual: On January 7, a 33-year-old Briton was raped at Anjuna by two unidentified persons, including her taxi driver. The rapists stole her purse too. Each of the half-dozen North Goa coastal villages which attract the bulk of the foreign visitors are distinct. Sinquerim, dominated by up-market tourists, doesn't often report such crime. Tight security ensures that even journalists entering a luxury hotel on a two-wheeler might be halted to face questions.

At the other end - both geographically and otherwise - is Anjuna-Vagator. Here, the three-decades old hippy-tourist monopoly is slowly but surely giving way to a commercialised circuit, throwing up a potent mix. Big business and the state government want to replace the low-budget tourists around with big-spenders. But villagers say they gain most from those who depend on the simple life of their rustic economy.

Baga and Calangute, former fishing villages sandwiched in the midst of this belt, face crime directed against tourists and related problems. Calangute villagers complain of local protection rackets, links between politicians and dubious organisations whose activities verge on the semi-legal, and land-grabs by builders in an area where tourism has sparked an uncontrolled building boom.

Some argue though that the crime along the beach belt is not all that new. Police officials dismissively say some foreign tourists report thefts of belongings to claim insurance back home. But Goa Speaker Tornazinho Cardozo calls for firm governmental action "otherwise the tourists will feel insecure". He recalls how in his coastal constituency at Ximer-Candolim, some young boys raped a tourist, some years ago, but they were not brought to book. ICP Brar retorts that it's hard to follow up such crime too. For instance, one Danish girl was raped. Police offered to pay for her passage stay in Goa, but she opted not to get involved in India's time-consuming legal



system. He warns the same could happen in the latest Swedish case.

But Rosy Fernandes, who rents accommodation to foreign tourists, has another story to tell. Two Frenchmen there were robbed twice. In one case, the elderly womenfolk were too afraid to intervene. Another time, the tourists woke up in the morning to find a part of their roof missing, along with cameras, radios and even their shoes.

“Foreign tourists have been harassed a lot. Both by thieves and by the police,” says another Anjuna villager, seeking anonymity for obvious reasons. Local medical practitioner Dr. Jawaharlal Henriques concurs. “In other areas, the Police presence is reassuring. In Anjuna, it seems to be just the opposite.”

“I want to spend my holiday in peace, not going to courts,” says Danish TV-2 journalist Frants Pandal, explaining why few complaints are made to the police. He says the police are not widely trusted, and foreign tourists believe some have resorted to “planting” of narcotics to extort sums of \$500. Pandal’s friend, Danish musician Frank E. got almost killed. He woke up a week back to find six to seven persons holding a knife to his throat at Badem-Anjuna. Just then, some of his friends turned up, making the robbers flee, says Pandal, a Goa regular since 1969 who is having second thoughts on coming back.

Goa’s Tourist Police are ill-equipped. “They are only there to shoo away the hawkers,” complains Roland Martins. His citizens group, the JGF, critical of Goa’s tourism policy for a decade, sees “strong hints” of political patronage to the crime.

Ms. Zuma Suzama of Croatia and Steinhaus Ralf of Frankfurt says tourists, ‘talk a lot’ about crime on the beach. But other foreign tourists don’t think much of the problem. “Most people we met are satisfied. They are here because they like Goa,” said a woman, declining to mention her name, who is part of a former Christian Ashram that now runs a library for tourists in Anjuna.

Teddy Nunes feels otherwise. “The growing crime is a recent trend. It will definitely affect tourism,” says this educationist whose family runs a mini-supermarket at the lively former hippy-haunt of Anjuna. Behind him are posters seeking information about a missing Swiss tourist, and announcing the departure of an overland bus leaving Goa for Europe.

John Lobo, who runs a popular “shack”, concurs. He feels that Goa’s image as a licentious place has been so widely propagated that foreign women tourists walking alone face a serious threat of being molested. “Many cases go unreported,” says he.

Add Shiv Sena’s Camilo D’Souza: “People come here for sunbathing. They don’t come to give you (some perverse pleasure). If you want that, go to Baina (the sleazy and distant red-light quarter of Goa.)

But one beach-belt constable commented: “They’re (leading licentious lives) all the time... then some complain of rape. Police who effected the arrests won’t even get monetary rewards, but just a favourable comment in their service records.” It is anyone’s guess whether such attitudes will take crime-solvers far.

Fredrick Noronha,
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Women and children in Kovalam

The single, most propagated reason for declaring tourism as an industry and imposing it as a development model is its employment generation aspect. In the preceding chapters we have dealt with the nature and extent of employment generated in Kovalam in its almost thirty years of tourism history. As women and children form a significant percentage of the workforce, and as their lot is a most pathetic one, their situation best reflects the poverty of the place in contrast to the opulent tourist consumption patterns and culture.

The most vivid visual in Kovalam is the scene of women and children squatting on the roads and breaking granite pieces into smaller ones for use in construction work. Stone workers, numerically speaking, are predominantly women and children. The second most important activity of the local people, coir spinning, is also woman centred. It is women who do the back breaking labour of processing the decayed husk into fibre by beating it with heavy sticks and then spinning the golden coloured yarn into coir of various thicknesses. In the coir sector women and children constitute at least ninety per cent of the total workforce, the same as in the stone sector. In the third sector, fishing, women work as retail sellers in the local as well as city markets and at home engage in the drying process.

In the tourism sector local women generally get work only as sweepers and laundresses in the small and big hotels. And for these jobs they must be young and tolerably good looking, especially if they are to get jobs in the bigger establishments. In some of these establishments they may be required to double up as emergency prostitutes. We often find women working as sweepers in government owned hotels, which are located on land that belonged to their families in the not so distant past. Some women, though few, eke out a miserable living from the tourism sector by hawking tender coconuts, fruit, trinkets, cheap cloth and so on to the tourists.

The most remarkable thing in relation to children is the very casual attitude towards education. Kovalam, in general, is a place characterised by high illiteracy and, of course, girl children often do not attend school. The large majority of them start working at a very early age (some as early as five to six years), and the rest half-heartedly attend school for a few years. Those who pass matriculation, or even reach up to it, are rare indeed. The case of boys is not much better. The whole social attitude is contra education and the schools are abysmally poor in quality. Only a few of the youth find their way into college. A couple of years back a racket selling printed school leaving certificates to youth, who had never attended any schools for more than two or three years, was busted. But it took several years to trace this racket and bust it. Therefore, whatever data there is on the number of Secondary School Leaving Certificate holders is unreliable.

The Granite Sector

Granite quarrying is a very primitive economic activity. Granite is available in plenty because the bone structure of the whole area is tough rock. Stone quarries are mainly private though there are a couple of big government owned ones too. The total number of workers in this sector comes to above 25,000, and almost 80-90 per cent are women and children. The only level of mechanisation that has occurred is the introduction of jackhammers in some of the quarries and the use of trucks to transport the big pieces of rock to the roadsides.



The division of labour between men, women, and children is sharply drawn. Men are occupied in the blasting and transporting activities using power drills and trucks. Wielding small hammers women and children break the stones at piece-rates into smaller pieces for use in concreting. A number of intermediaries are involved, some of them are women.

Ten years back there was a move to organise these workers into co-operative societies and a lead society was formed with government support. They procured their own trucks to transport the granite, and some partly successful attempts were made to push up the wages to a little more decent level. But this attempt was short-lived because the quarry contractors were too powerful, and the trade union and society leaderships very receptive to corruption. The union and society no longer exist and the trucks and other infrastructural facilities procured by the society have corroded beyond redemption. After the collapse of this experiment no further attempts were made to better the lot of the workers. In any case, by this time the priority had decisively shifted to generating tourist facilities, and it was very much in the interest of the tourist sector to maintain the overall backwardness and obtain supply of this prime construction raw material at the cheapest rates. Organising these workers into a bargaining grouping obviously runs counter to the interests of the tourism sector.

The women and children, ranging from seven to seventy years in age (most of the children employed are female), do not have any enclosed place to work but are compelled to work in public on the roadsides, usually under the protection of a single coconut leaf over their heads. The work site is dictated by the convenience of the truck movements. A relatively healthy woman, working from morning to evening, breaks about six to seven baskets of rubble, which brings in a maximum of Rs. 35 as wages. Children and old people get much less. And this is in a State where the average daily agricultural worker wage ranges between Rs. 80 to 100 a day.

Tourists seem quite fascinated by this sight of women and children sitting by the roadside, in the fierce sun or torrential rain, wielding the hammer in dull monotonous movements. This seems especially so in the case of female tourists. They can often be observed practicing photographic rape to immortalise this vision for their friends back home and to congratulate themselves on how far advanced they are when compared to these stone age people. In fact, many tourists freely use this expression to describe the conditions of those living here. Some of them can get so moved by the pathetic sight of these women workers that they donate cash on the spot to any one worker who happens to catch their passing sympathy. So much for the interaction between tourists and the local labouring people.

Occupational hazards are many among these workers. Women and children engaged in this work soon develop respiratory problems like asthma and tuberculosis. They are also troubled by problems with vision and eye infections. There being no proper medical facilities in the area many of them live with fatal diseases without even being aware of what exactly is corroding them.

The economic condition of these workers (along with several others who are in no better position) is best illustrated in the retail provision shops after work is over. They cannot afford to buy and stock provisions for even a single day. Their purchase list runs something like: fifty paise worth tea, a rupee worth of cooking oil, a rupee worth of sugar and so forth. When they fall ill, which



is common enough because of mal-nourishment, it is sheer starvation and indebtedness. The scope for borrowing is very narrow because their neighbours are mostly like themselves. The huts are dingy and dark with almost no ventilation. During the rainy season they are damp and wet too. Compared to the general working class living standards in Keralam these people are inexorably poor. This is a picture of one end of the social spectrum of Kovalam. The perversity is that the workers who build up the tourist infrastructure are themselves a tourist attraction.

Many tourism planners believe, if only such sights of abject deprivation were not there, more tourists would be flocking to Keralam. Such poverty is considered an affront to the higher sensibilities of the whites, and things would work out much better in the tourism sector if these people could be moved away from the place. A version of this approach was put into practice by the Marcos regime in the Philippines when huge walls were erected in Manila to hide the squalid ghettos from the eyes of foreigners travelling from the airport to the five-star hotels. Many of the tourism planners would actually prefer to displace all these people from the area itself, and thus have an exclusive tourist zone. Of course, this is only an infantile dream; but it was just such an infantile dream that one Mr. Sanjay Gandhi tried to implement at Turkman Gate in Delhi during the period of internal emergency at the cost of hundreds of lives which went under the bulldozers.

Coir Sector Workers

Coir spinning is a traditional occupation of the people of the area. Kovalam and surrounding villages are ancient palm fibre and coir production centres, which were linked to the main marketing centres and ports of Travancore by water. This traditional household based production has been in its death throes since quite some time. The area is one of heavy fishing and coir used to be in great demand internally. But now costlier synthetic rope that lasts longer is in vogue at the expense of coir and its producers. This by itself is due to the absolute lack of any mechanisation or modernisation in the entire sector. The production process remains as crude as ever; the only difference being that instead of bullock carts transporting the husks to the estuaries and back, and boats transporting the fibre and coir to market centres, mini trucks are used.

The employment pattern is similar to that in the quarry sector. The division of labour between the sexes is clearly defined. Men are the transporters and women carry production for the market. Coconut husks are collected from the coconut gardens by middlemen and then immersed in saline water for retting. When retting is complete after a certain number of days they are transported to the huts of coir workers, heaped into small mounds and sprinkled with common salt and sand. Water is continuously sprinkled over the heap. Women workers, using heavy sticks, beat the husks to extract the fibre. The husks are finely beaten to the point where the golden coloured fibre separates from the pith. This fibre is spun using what is called a ratt, a crude mechanical appliance of two rotating wooden wheels on movable stands. The loose fibre is spun into coir, first in thin threads, then into thicker ropes, according to purpose. The extraction of fibre and consequent spinning is done entirely by women and girl children. When the next load of retted husks are delivered the fibre or coir is collected and payment is made on piece-rate basis. Coir is generally locally used. If bought in the form of fibre it is taken to centres like Alappuzha where mills producing coir-based products like coirised mattresses and carpets are located.

Coir is exported to other States as well as abroad, and centres like Alappuzha and Kollam are the main caterers to such markets. When compared to these centres, where the production process is



mechanised to a considerable level and living wages prevail, Kovalam and neighbouring areas are pathetically backward. The production process stands where it was a hundred years ago and women workers are the worst victims of this chronic backwardness. Again, this backwardness prevails because tourism is the priority here. Private capital flows into tourism and the State focuses on Kovalam purely as a touristic commodity. This tells very harshly on productive sectors of the economy, and coir became one of the first casualties.

There is a marked decrease in the number of coconut trees. The de-emphasis of agriculture and crowding of the land with buildings for tourism has taken a heavy toll. This directly affects the coir sector. Open unemployment in this sector has become institutionalised. There is almost a fifty per cent reduction in the number of man-days worked. Coupled with below subsistence level returns the situation is doubly cruel.

Fish Workers

In the fishing sector, the third biggest traditional economic activity of the region, women work mainly as fish hawkers going to the nearby markets with basket loads on their heads, or they hawk the fish from door to door. On Kovalam beach they buy in bulk from the fishermen in on the spot auctions and make a margin from selling retail. This is more lucrative when compared to the quarry and coir sectors, but is strictly dependent on the availability of fish. For example, during the peak of the monsoons there is very little catch, and these women sellers simply vanish from the scene. A corollary aspect of the fishing scene is that when there is a bumper catch fish goes very cheap and these women buy up bigger quantities than usual and dry the fish in the sun for stocking and selling when there is no or very little catch.

In general, the monsoons are periods of extreme privation for the fisherfolk. The men cannot go to the sea, and very often it becomes the sole responsibility of the women to avoid total starvation, forcing them to seek work in other sectors like granite breaking. Any accumulation that was possible during the fishing season is automatically wiped out in no time with the result that no significant permanent improvement in economic status, however marginal, ever happens. And, educationally, this is the most backward section of people; so there is no point in expecting any improvement in quality of life from that quarter.

In Vizhinjam, falling within the tourism circle of Kovalam, the situation is not exactly the same. This is the heavy fishing area from where more than 3000 boats go out into the sea. Mechanisation is limited to outboard engines fitted to traditional craft, but the catch is quite large. There are big export oriented dealers here, though not as many as in Kollam or Kochi. But not all varieties of fish are exported; the exportable items are the high cost ones, and they go from here to Kochi port. Other fish, as well as a portion of the exportable fish, feeds the city as well as the interior districts. Here also a good many women are sellers and dryers, but their overall conditions of living are the same as that of the fisherwomen of Kovalam. Educationally and healthcare wise, they are in a worse position than the women in Kovalam proper, if that is at all possible.

At least ninety per cent of the total number of women of the area belong to the three categories enumerated above. Though they belong to occupationally different communities they merge into one another according to the pressure of circumstances. Even then, as sociological entities, they remain quite separate.



To generalise, the most outstanding and visible feature marking the conditions of women and children of Kovalam and its immediate environs is the stark level of poverty manifested in material conditions, educational levels and health standards. The standard of living is not typical of Kerala on a macro-level. In fact, the whole place ought to be declared as an especially backward area, and worthwhile projects chalked out and implemented. To state that tourism is going to ameliorate their position even a few degrees is an outright lie because the present position is one after thirty years of unbridled and fantastic growth of tourism in the area. Their situation has only become worse with each passing year. Tourism is propagated as development oriented; however, in the case of the people of Kovalam, as can be seen from the conditions strangulating the women and children, it is the reverse.

There is a minority, about five per cent of the population, that is urbanised, educated and economically better off. This section can be called the middle class in terms of economic status, and a good section from among them are in one or the other way dependent on tourism. To this section belong the restaurant and other shop owners, taxi and autorickshaw owners, petty officials and so on. There are a few big sharks, but they are only a micro percentage. The situation of women in these families is not characteristic of the place, and their children go to the more expensive schools, though most of the adults are educationally poor. It is a striking feature of Kovalam that, although the lowest and middle classes are often close relatives, there is utmost contempt for the working masses. Community-wise almost ninety-nine per cent of the people belong to what are classified as backward communities and scheduled castes; however, economic differences have to a large extent broken the teeth of any real solidarity. The new class structure that has evolved as a result of the growth of tourism is a highly distorted one. The class structure has developed in such a way as to marginalise the overwhelming majority of the people. In other words, the superimposed and inorganic nature of this development is shocking, and the status of the majority of the women and children of the area is the most acute expression of this absurdity.

T.G.Jacob

(Tales of Tourism from Kovalam, Pg. 92-99, Odyssey, Thiruvananthapuram 1998)



Working women in Boracay

[The disparity of employment both between men and women and between migrant and local women on Boracay, Philippines, is explored by Sylvia Chant of the London School of Economics. She illuminates how women are exploited by both local male entrepreneurs, the authorities and visiting tourists. Sylvia has published widely on gender and development, with particular reference to female employment and household survival strategies].

Though still one of the smallest and quietest tourist resorts in the Philippines, Boracay is without doubt its fastest growing destination and presently attracts nearly one twelfth of the country's foreign visitors. Heralded by the Philippine government as the 'centre-piece' of the nation's tourist development strategy, Boracay receives priority funding from the Department of Tourism and is given prominent coverage in both national and overseas marketing.

Lying just off the coast of Panay Island in the Western Visayas, Boracay was 'discovered' by a foreign film crew in the late 1960s. It was only in the 1980s that major public and foreign investment reached the island, and even then, the development fuelled by outside capital has stayed broadly consonant with the island's own distinctive brand of 'backyard tourism'.

Boracay is traditionally home to a series of small fishing and farming communities. Its main tourism attractions are its white palm-fringed beaches, crystalline waters, and wide range of water sports. Most accommodation is in the form of rustic beach cottages and low-rise hotels. Although backpackers have long predominated among tourists to the island, the recent growth in package holidays (largely organised by agencies in major Philippine cities such as Manila and Cebu), is giving rise to increased numbers of families and older groups of visitors.

None the less, Boracay continues to differ quite substantially from the national picture insofar as it does not receive the usual quotient of lone male tourists in the 40+-age bracket. While men are three quarters of foreign tourists to the Philippines as a whole, in Boracay they are 55 per cent and two thirds of both male and female visitors to Boracay are 35 years or below. This in part arises from the lack of an established 'sex trade' infrastructure common to so many other Philippine tourism destinations such as Manila, Cebu, Puerto Galera and Pagsanjan.

Boracay is actively promoted as a family resort, with strict clamp-downs on the opening of 'girlie bars' and staunch resistance on the part of the island authorities to make compulsory the issue of health certificates to bar and restaurant workers, mainly for fear of acknowledging and legitimating the operation of sex-oriented enterprises. Boracay is presented by government officials as a clean and wholesome alternative. Only locals and visitors know that the underlying reality is somewhat less glossy than the promotional rhetoric would lead one to believe.

Notwithstanding the presence of a discreet, low-level (and growing) sex trade on the island, the vast bulk of Boracay's populace are engaged in a wide range of more conventional commercial and service activities normally associated with sun and sea destinations. Indeed, the rapid growth in the tourism labour market from the mid-1980s onwards has attracted migrants from surrounding farming and fishing communities, as well as from towns and cities further afield, including Manila. This has contributed to swelling the population to around 8,000 - about one third of whom were born outside the island.



In keeping with national patterns, women have figured prominently among migrants and interesting lines of segmentation in the labour market have emerged not only between women and men, but also between migrant and native women.

In terms of 'the general configuration of the labour market, two distinct types of employment are apparent: that of a 'formal' nature whereby people work for employers in restaurants, hotels and shops, and that of a more 'informal' nature where people are wholly or partially self-employed. The latter includes such activities as beachfront vending, boat operating or taxi-driving (taxis on Boracay consist of pedicabs or motorised bikes and tricycles).

In formal employment, women predominate as sales assistants, chambermaids, laundry women and in certain kinds of restaurants (particularly beach bars and eateries) as waitresses. While men are also found in room cleaning, laundry work and waiting, occupations tending to be exclusively male include cooking, gardening, maintenance, security, portage, and guest transportation.

Rationalisations by employers for the recruitment of men and women into different activities include those based on 'natural' factors such as strength, as well as the different skills assumed to be acquired by men and women in the course of their different types of upbringing. With the notable exception of cooking, which is very much a male preserve in Philippine restaurants and hotels, women are thought to have an aptitude for most other domestic-related activities such as cleaning, since they are more likely to have helped their mothers in the home. Men on the other hand, are thought to have an affinity for more technical jobs associated with maintenance.

Beyond this, however, and for occupations requiring direct contact with the public, a number of more tenuous explanations are also used to justify the selective recruitment of the different sexes. Female sales assistants are seen as being more adept at arranging merchandise, more patient, and more importantly, likelier to attract custom. Many shops are open-fronted and assistants are often expected to stand outside and encourage passers-by to walk in. In addition, female sales assistants are imagined to have 'more of a way' with clientele and thus greater powers of persuasion necessary for a competitive retail market.

The same kind of principles apply to female recruitment in beachfront restaurants. Indeed one criterion for applicants obtaining hostessing or waitressing work is to have a 'pleasing personality'. This widely used Filipino term means, amongst other things, youth, good looks, grooming, charm and a 'well-modulated' voice. Moreover, female restaurant workers often have to dress-up in 'native' costumes with flowers in their hair to give them further appeal. Thus although these jobs are not apparently associated with the direct use of Filipino women as sexual commodities, there are obvious sexual overtones embodied in recruitment and employment practices.

The general male-female divisions in formal employment tend to be mirrored in the 'informal' sector. Men dominate in passenger and freight boat transport, in taxi-driving and in fishing, whereas women are predominantly ambulant vendors or sellers of services such as domestic labour and child-minding. Although men are around 15 per cent of all ambulant vendors, they are involved in a rather narrow range of products. While women are engaged in the sale of massages, manicures,



fresh fruit, coconut oil, home-cooked snacks, shorts and T-shirts, shellcraft and wickerware, men are generally confined to the sale of three items: ice-cream, fish and newspapers. All these tend to have a guaranteed market and do not require the 'hard sell' necessitated by those peddling 'nonessential' services or products such as massages and handicrafts. Guaranteed markets also mean that male vendors normally have higher and more stable earnings than women.

There are also differences between migrant and native women's employment. On the whole, migrant women are involved in formal employment, whereas native women predominate in informal commercial activity. Many of those in formal employment, particularly in restaurants and hotels, are migrant, young and single and live-in where they work, sharing a room with up to ten female colleagues. The relevance of the live-in system and its interaction with migrant status can be seen from a number of perspectives.

As far as employers are concerned, migrant live-ins are more flexible as they work longer hours than those who have local homes to go to, and are also less prone to absenteeism. In addition, deductions for bed and board can amount to half the salary to which they are legally entitled and unscrupulous employers use it to pay their workers far less than the minimum wage. Other advantages include the fact that provision of a home to a vulnerable migrant tends to foster loyalty, and more importantly, fear. Migrant workers lacking family in the vicinity are often scared to put a foot wrong in case they are thrown out on the street.

Setting-up home under the paternalistic wing of an employer can also provide a certain amount of psychological and emotional security for teenagers and young adults from remote rural villages. Moreover, without the responsibility of running their own homes and feeding themselves, migrants can use most, if not all, their cash earnings to help family members back home (which is often the major factor motivating their decision to move in the first place). Especially common is the practice whereby a migrant worker of either sex takes responsibility for the schooling costs of younger siblings. As for the women born in Boracay itself, especially those over thirty, the tendency is to work in the informal sector, especially in independent commercial activities such as ambulant vending or home-based retail and production. Domestic-based enterprises include sari-sari stores (front-room shops selling everything from beer to matches to cleaning fluids); carinderias (home based cateries often under a nipa palm canopy, which sell a range of cooked snacks such as sticky rice and barbecued banana), and shellcraft workshops where women (and often their children) make jewellery, lampshades and door hangings for sale to tourist shops.

The prevalence of mature women in this domain is largely explained by the dearth of formal sector openings for them. They also usually have children to take care of which makes the long shifts common in formal employment extremely difficult.

Some of the more positive reasons for the movement of older women into independent commerce is that they may have more in the way of assets (savings, property and so on) necessary to set up their own businesses. Local women have the added advantage of being in place when tourism started to evolve and have in several senses colonised the market. Migrants to Boracay are conceivably put off by existing competition, and lacking capital and assets, often find it easier to work for an employer instead.



Despite the immense range of formal and informal jobs performed by women, the highest earners in Boracay still tend to be men. One reason is that women are often more flexible in their profit margins. Ambulant masseuses, for example, charge a regular rate of 50 pesos (\$1.30) for a half hour massage, but depending on their custom that day and the type of massage the client wants, will lower their prices to have the work. Men who operate motorbike taxis on the other hand, not only rarely deviate from their standard rate (15 pesos minimum for a short ride of up to 5 minutes), but will often overcharge and refuse to take passengers who balk at paying inflated prices.

In short, men appear to have the luxury to turn down business in a way that women cannot, and to be less prepared to take a cut in profits. Part of this may be due to the fact that women are the economic mainstay of many households on the island and therefore have to generate income. Indeed local culture seems highly tolerant of men not only being unemployed, but taking their wives' earnings for drinking and gambling. Women are thus caught in a double bind of earning less and paying more for making a living.

In light of the above, it is not perhaps surprising that some younger women, migrant and native alike, do end up breaking into sex work on a casual, if not full-time basis. While there is no formal sex industry on Boracay, the idea that Filipina women are available and companionable is pervasive, and lone male tourists will often pick someone up to 'take care of them during their stay'.

Some women seem to enter such arrangements with a view either to marriage or to a relationship which will help them leave the country to work abroad (again indicative of their low earning potential in the Philippines). Nonetheless, more crucial to the emergence of Boracay's sex industry is the increased influx of older male tourists who view the island as just another place where they can buy women, a process undoubtedly exacerbated by local employers who recruit women into jobs with a strong customer relations component on the grounds of their charm and beauty.

The resolute commitment on the part of the authorities to maintain Boracay as a 'clean' alternative to the sex spots of the capital and elsewhere is to be welcomed, but it should also be borne in mind that failure to acknowledge, let alone intervene, in the developing local sex industry carries major risks. While sex workers in most Philippine cities and resorts are subject to weekly health checks, are given HIV and AIDS awareness training, and granted free supplies of condoms for self-protection, women in Boracay have no such resource.

Key questions to be asked are whether explicit recognition of the problem is a necessary evil for the longer term health and welfare of the island's population; whether measures might be taken to enhance women's general access to work and earnings (and protect them from the abuses attached to male insolvency at the household level) and whether international pressure might be brought to bear on those men from the advanced economies who see the Philippines and other Third World settings as havens of cheap sexual gratification.

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Sylvia Chant,

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Section Four

The Penance

[The debate of women issues and tourism will not be complete without its dehumanizing impact on women as a person. Tourism is an industry that has objectified women as a commodity for consumption. Every tourism brochure project women as object for sex and destinations are marketed accordingly. Women in a third world situation often do not opt to have 'preferences' or 'right to choose' the employment she wants to. In situations like this gender domination prevailing in the social setup, women are uprooted from their natural surroundings and alienated from their traditional occupations due to new economic policies, left few other space for women than to draw themselves into the sea of sex trade. Tourism policies and industry do not seem to acknowledge this and therefore unwilling to address the issue, even though concerned groups, individuals and even institutions like National Women's Commission (constituted to look into the welfare of women) has brought this issue into the preview of the policy makers. Attempts are also being made to bring this issue into the ambit of legal framework]

Sex tourism in South Asia

Keywords

Asia, Ethics, Tourism

Abstract: Sex tourism is the dark side of the global phenomenon of tourism. Every day we read about the benefits of tourism, its income and employment potential, its ability to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor, its potential to overcome uneven development in backward regions of the world. Above all, its contribution to the balance of payments and foreign exchange earnings for the decolonised and third world countries that must enter the capitalist mainstream if they are to make the transition to the twenty-first century. Asks why sex tourism is being condoned and wonders why more voices are not raised in protest against its continuance.

The World Tourism Organisation and the World Travel and Tourism Council have made presentations to captive audiences on the Vision 2020, which emphasises the boom in tourism, once liberalisation and the free market system can make the problem of numbers disappear. This boom is said to be particularly beneficial for women and first time employment seekers. They talk about infrastructure, open skies and the free flow of money and goods. They never talk about the trafficking in women and young girls from Burma and Yunan to Thailand, from Nepal and the north-east of India to Mumbai and Calcutta, to Japan and Europe as dancers, entertainers and sex workers, as mail order brides or as domestic servants. They also maintain a silence on the packages which offer men with low incomes in Europe and the USA an opportunity to "act like a King" on a sex tour to Asia. Perhaps the greatest cover is still to be lifted on paedophilia, sex tourism that exploits young children, both girls and boys as commodities.

Sex tourism is a purely physical encounter in which the partner is no more than an animated object. Many men choose an Asian girl for such encounters because no verbal communication is possible. All human attributes like name, values, family, history are obliterated to cover up the identity of the girl. The pidgin English/German/French/Japanese conversation through which sex workers in tourist destinations try to establish a relationship only helps to assuage the guilt of the sex tourist who can then feel that the satisfaction of his physical urge is also helping the girl fulfil her economic obligations. For sex tourists, a trip to Asia is an opportunity to have a good time. Sun, sea, sand and sexual services are the backdrop to the definition of a good time. The



dehumanising nature of sex tourism is increased if the sexual object is a child. Of the 160 paedophiles and sex tourists arrested up to 1994, 25 per cent were American, 18 per cent German, 14 per cent Australian, 12 per cent British and 6 per cent French. Seven Japanese also feature in the list. Estimates of child prostitutes in South Asia, which are difficult to come by, place the number for Bangladesh at 10,000, India -400,000-500,000, Pakistan 40,000 and Sri Lanka 30,000. These estimates are not comparable since they cover a period from 1985 to 1992, yet they give some idea of the volumes involved.

Who is a sex tourist? A good definition, based on the kind of advertisements that appear in special magazines and through word of mouth, is a man who is going through a mid-life crisis, who has been disenchanted with his enjoyment of life due to feminism and women's liberation rhetoric; a man who is tired of taking a politically correct position on his sexual preferences because of social pressure. A sex tourist can be a worker, a professional or a manager, but all of them have one thing in common: they want to feel like real men.

To be real men, harmony with nature is needed and Asian women are real women who live in harmony with nature. Richard Pesta of San Diego is the tour operator who gives this reality to his customers! Organised sex tours have been advertised in Australia, France, Japan, Germany, Norway Sweden, Switzerland, the UK and the USA. The growth of sex tours prompted the United Nations, which had proposed the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to ask WTO to investigate the issue. The WTO set up a committee of experts in 1994 and defined sex tourism as "Tourism which has as its primary purpose the effecting of a commercial sexual relationship." It has now recommended a ban on child sex tourism. However, being a market-led organisation, it has not developed any guidelines on how this ban is to be implemented.

It has been observed that in India it is the poorer foreigner who comes to the backward states to take advantage of the exchange rate, and such tourists focus on how to maximise their dollars. Their interaction with local communities and people is much closer and often leads to sex tourism and sexual relationships. There is a great likelihood that this tourist is from the working class or lower income groups amongst executives or professionals. Trade Unions and NGOs in the field of tourism, as well as women's organisations, can study the demand side and guidelines can be developed to implement the ban.

Another observation is that, in India, the sex workers are not necessarily local women but migrant sex workers at the lower level. Recent disclosures have indicated that local women from a higher social status do operate as sex workers under front organisations like ice cream parlours and beauty parlours. Sex tourism takes place in communities, localities, as well as in hotels and on the street and not only in designated "red light" districts. Thus the supply side is also a serious concern for the Trade Unions and NGOs to work on.

Case studies have shown that the quality tourists do not have a long stay in India and at a destination a tour will not exceed 24-48 hours. It is the budget tourist who comes to the backward states to take advantage of the exchange rate, and such tourists often have an overbearing attitude to local people and cultures. They also come with the impression that the sexual mores are not affected by monogamy or Christian ethics. These are the tourists who approach the local population with hostility, a lack of appreciation, for their culture and lifestyle.



They bully them over payment and participate in sex tourism. The sex workers are not necessarily local women but migrant women from neighbouring states or neighbouring countries. The age of the sex worker is also coming down, with the AIDS epidemic being studied in India. The Convention on the Rights of the Child has stated that a child is defined as one who is under 18 years of age. To bypass this restriction, many countries have covertly defended prostitution by determining an age of consent, which has now reduced to 12 years. Recent disclosures have indicated that local women from a higher social status do operate as sex workers under front organisations. Sources also indicate that the upper grade of hotels have their own resource base for sex tourism, linked by mobile phones. In some cases, sex tourism is related to drug peddlers who are looking for the long-stay tourist at cheap destinations. Young girls are used as couriers and often get drawn into the sex trade. Data from the Department of Tourism sources relating to popular destinations for the backpacker type of tourist for 1996 suggest the following:

- Goa: 52,973 tourists;
- Kerala: 185,863 tourists;
- Tamil Nadu: 613,982 tourists;
- Karnataka: 64,788 tourists;
- Himachal Pradesh: 50,230 tourists; and
- Andhra Pradesh: 63,652 tourists.

The rate of growth of tourist arrivals ranges from 15 per cent per year in season, to 9.6 per cent in the off season. This growth rate is well above the international average. Given this growth, the proportion of those coming for sex tourism, particularly child sex tourism, is likely to grow, although data are not explicit on the numbers involved in the sex tourism trade. Generally, the 14-19 age group predominates in the age profile of the sex worker. Most of these girls are procured through trafficking, which explains the high concentration of migrants. Goa has reported many cases of paedophilia but again the proportion is not known. The National Commission for Women and its state counterparts are just beginning to estimate the size of the trade, which is still very much underground. In the Metro cities there are well-identified “red light” districts, but in the smaller towns and the backward states, particularly the rural hinterlands, this is not the case.

Sex workers in the red light districts are beginning to organise themselves into sex workers’ unions. Many central unions do not recognise the term sex worker and do not consider such women as legitimate workers. Women’s organisations and governmental institutions are only now beginning to come face to face with this issue, but they do not have a unified perspective. The issue of paedophilia is also being recognised as a prostitution issue only in recent years.

The debate on prostitution clearly indicates the gulf between Government NGOs, trades unions, and women’s organisations and the organised prostitutes. Whereas the former demand a ban on sex tourism and child prostitution, the latter are demanding protection from law enforcing agencies, brothel owners, and pimps. They want to operate legally and have been effective in carrying the message of safe sex to their members. However, they do not have the issue of child prostitution on their agenda.

The sexual abuse and exploitation of children is a world-wide phenomenon (Ireland, 1993). Several studies have been attempted to understand the extent and severity of the phenomenon,



emphasising different aspects relating to the travel trade, psychological deviance or socio-economic facets. There is sufficient evidence gathered from organisations working with children, and from government sources to demonstrate that there is extensive exploitation of children in India. The evidence even suggests the existence of systematic and organised patterns in child exploitation.

Invariably the studies pertaining to India have highlighted factors like poverty unemployment and mass illiteracy as “push” factors, forcing children to indulge in prostituting. The “pull” factors include tourism, sexual perversion and consumerism, as highlighted by various studies. However, these studies are not based on systematic data and hence suffer from methodological shortcomings. Consequently, the conclusions arrived at are open to questions.

The leisured rich wander at will, in fantasy islands of luxury in the international hotels or in enclaves of privilege in international resorts, in the midst of social and environmental degradation, to be served by those whose lands and cultures have been appropriated. Tour operators and travel agents facilitate their wanderings, with newer, more fantastic and greater value for money opportunities. Governments commit money and support to the growth of tourism and turn a blind eye to its impacts. Sex tourism always takes place somewhere else, and not in one's own country.

Tourism liberates those who are free from want, having profited from the movement of money and goods, as humanity has been disenfranchised. The globalisation project is therefore a selective and intensely ideological process where the perpetuation of privilege, the abuse of the earth's resources and the exploitation of the people of poor countries is the supreme civilisational goal of the global culture which seeks to break down the very barriers that have ensured, at the very least, the survival of the ravaged and uprooted people who live on the margins of the free market. The consumption of sexual pleasure is integral to the liberalising process. Its visibility in the countries of the Pacific Rim, promoted as a tourist's dream by the PATA, is closely linked to the process of liberalisation. As the South Asian region comes under pressure from the Washington twins, the processes of structural adjustment and market forces have lifted the veil of secrecy and broken the conspiracy of silence on the issue of sex tourism.

Tourism has become a mark of crossing the threshold of liminality that constitutes the Other in terms of class, nation and gender. Slumbering on a beach, vegetating by the pool or travelling in a tour bus causes the mind to shut down. An extended period of relaxation can cause a fall in intelligence. The tourist is now ready to be manipulated by the message of what constitutes relaxation. The tourist/pleasure activity can then be used as an enactment of class identity in a stratified world, where the tourist represents the ruling class, and the native at the destination represents the serving class. Eating and playing constitute an image, a cultural symbol, both for class differentiation and as justification for the desire for variety in recreational pursuits. Sex tourism is one such activity.

It is interesting that sex tourism is often promoted in the same way as gastronomy which has become an important attribute of a tourist destination. The food metaphor is essential in constructing the image of a connoisseur, the one who seeks an authentically exotic experience and many descriptions of women for sale use food metaphors like “a piece of cake”. Women, in tourism, are also constructed as the symbolic bearers of the nation (McClintock, 1995) and much of destination promotion features young, attractive and enticing women. The air hostess is a well-



known symbolic representation of the identity of a nation with its women. Consuming women thus embodies the act of consuming the destination.

For sex tourism to survive, the consumption of women's (and children's) bodies must allow men to construct themselves as men, as well as men of a certain class, of a certain nationality. It must also help in the establishment of the concept of performative identity (Butler, 1990), which denies subjectivity and identity to the person whose body is so consumed. The underlying assumption is that both the man and the woman (or child) are using the sexual transaction for class advancement. This is the so-called "voluntary" participation of the subject and object in sex tourism. The money transaction makes them both equal. However, in practice, sex tourism is a process that is predicated on difference in gender, class and nation.

How does this process of differentiation take place? The reason for the privileging of tourism and its rapid growth and legitimacy lie in the significance of play as the liminal site of happiness, rather than work, the site of stress. In the sociology of tourism, the concept of play has been expanded to include crossing the threshold of acceptable behaviour and aspirations to achieve recreation (of the self), so that through tourism the tourist transforms himself through self-fulfilment, which is often synonymous with self-indulgence. Such extension does not take into account economic realities, cultures and social identities. The character of mainstream tourism is thus that of an escape. Even though motivation is highly subjective and difficult to define because there is a complex of attractions that operate in tourism demand, 56 per cent of Western tourists and more recently Japanese tourists, are motivated by the escape factor. Package tours to cheap destinations have made the world accessible to those with limited experience and money. It has extended the home environment into the foreign destination so that the tourist will not have to face the consequences of their own narrow view of the world.

Travel literature or the art of faction (fact and fiction), consists of inauthentic place-making through exoticism, denial of misery, rationalisation of disquietude and playing to myths and stereotypes. The problem is further intensified with the post modern view of a de-centred self, no longer a point of origin or a source, but a product of multiple social and psychological forces; a self displaced and reassembled in fragments. To seek answers to the construction of sex tourism as an acceptable tourism product, allowing the free play of market forces, ignores the link between self, identity, gender and hegemonic discourses that are situated in class, nationality, the international division of labour and culturally constructed and sanctioned modes of behaviour between the sexes. The tourist gaze is thus ethno-centric, chauvinistic, male dominated and patriarchal. Women in the Third World have been transformed into the victims of tourism's cannibal economics, through the commodification and commercialisation of their bodies, as the site of play. They can be touched, patted, bought and sold in a process that has passed through several stages: colonial exploitation, military oppression, missionary efforts to transform values and beliefs, anthropological descriptions and evaluations, all of which are the conceptual and attitudinal baggage of the tourism encounter, which in its worst form manifests itself as sex tourism.

The tourism industry being demand led, uses rhetorical devices and antithesis to neutralise the negative self images that tourism has given rise to through the process of globalisation. Crossing frontiers of normative behaviour is one of the freedoms that the liberalisation process has encouraged and, as we set higher targets for tourism, we are also encouraging the growth of sex tourism.



Why have women tourists not become an agency to fight sex tourism? It is a disquieting fact that women often participate with men in watching cabarets and sex shows, without expressing solidarity with their dehumanised sisters. They can be seen in the bazaars, haggling over beads and baubles, and carry all the attributes of paternalism represented in the opening up of tribal regions, the promotion of urban kitsch, ethnic chic and bazaar art, and simple generalisations about cultures and destinations which allow them the freedom to exercise their own aspirations, often denied to them in their own societies. Many wives have expressed the view that they preferred their husbands to go to the East and participate in sex tourism rather than to look for sexual variety at home.

They feel less threatened by the distance and the faceless women who are the objects of sex tourism. The fact that women's organisations and feminists have not studied the issue of sex tourism is a reminder that much needs to be done to end such activity. Academe has also not given sex tourism the attention it deserves.

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'EMBODIED' COMMODITIES

Stereotypes of gender and race often motivate people to sex tourism. Jacqueline Sanchez Taylor interviewed male and female sex tourists and here provides insight into what forms their opinions.

Jamaica, the Dominican Republic and Cuba, like other economically underdeveloped holiday destinations, are marketed as culturally different places and all tourists are encouraged to view this 'difference' as a part of what they have a right to consume on their holiday. The construction of difference takes place around ideas such as 'natural' vs. 'civilised', leisure vs. work and exotic vs. mundane, rich vs. poor, sexual vs. repressive, powerful vs. powerless.

Western, white, male sex tourists have been travelling to 'Third World' countries for many years and there is nothing new about the sexual exploitation of local women in this context. Indeed, there is a long history of sexual exploitation of women under colonial rule and western men have long projected racist fantasies onto the 'primitive'/natural Other. But the long-haul tourist industry is turning this kind of post-colonial fantasy into an item of mass consumption. Sex guides written by white western men, such as *Travel and the Single Male* by Bruce Cassier tap into the idea of 'difference' to justify the sexual exploitation of Black women in these countries. They tell tourists that prostitution does not have the same meaning in the Caribbean as prostitution in the West. The sex guides say that Caribbean women are not really prostitutes but 'nice' girls who like to have a good time. A key component of sex tourism is the objectification of a sexualised racialised 'Other'. As author and self-confessed sex tourist Bruce Cassier says: "You think of those incredible.... Women, ranging in colour from white chocolate to dark chocolate, available to you at the subtle nod of your head or touch-of-your-hat." The racist stereotype of the exotic and erotic Black woman is also an image that is used to sell sex tourism in countries like the Dominican Republic and Cuba. 'Blackness' and the ideology which constructs it, is part of the commodity that sex tourists are buying.

Sex tourists are not an homogenous group: they may be women or men, Black, Asian or white, homosexual or heterosexual, middle class or working class. Numerically, the main group of sex tourists are Western, white, heterosexual men. However it is important to recognise that even amongst this group, there is diversity in terms of sexual interests and attitudes towards prostitute use. Although it is necessary to recognise differences between sex tourists in terms of their sexual practices, I want to tentatively suggest that sex tourism offers all of them opportunities to affirm a particular 'racialised' and gendered identity. So far as white male sex tourists are concerned, it is not just cheap sex that they pursue. They also like travelling to 'Third World' countries because they feel that somehow the proper order between the genders and between the 'races' is restored. Women and girls are at their command, Blacks and Hispanics and Asians are serving them, shining their shoes, cleaning their rooms and so on. All is as it should be.

Back home, Black political activism and feminist politics have challenged and undermined the unquestioned power which gave some white men a sense of self from their gender and racialised identity. In this sense, sex tourists find that their masculinity and racialised power is affirmed in ways that it is not at home. For example, sex tourists described how they loved the Dominican Republic because as white Westerners, they were placed at the apex of the social, economic and racial hierarchy. Two Canadians explained that in Canada, the welfare system penalised hard



working individuals like themselves and rewarded the idle and “lazy” Blacks who lived off the state.

As we talked, two shoeshine boys aged eight and ten, approached offering to shine their shoes. We were in a bar and it had gone midnight, yet these children were walking around barefoot looking for tourist shoes to shine in order to earn money for their families. One of these sex tourists said: “In Canada, those kids would be sat in front of cable TV. Their parents would be on welfare, and the whole family would be just watching TV. I know. I’m a real estate dealer, I see those people, how they live. They don’t want to work. They just get their welfare, and it’s the tax payer who gets the bill.” Like many other sex tourists, these men were resentful of Blacks having even basic rights in Canada and prefer to see women and children prostituting themselves instead of “sponging” off the state. “At least they do something in return,” they remarked.

But sex tourists can also give expression to more subtle forms of racism. Some also want to believe that they are inverting the hostile ‘race relations’ in their own country by mixing with Blacks in Cuba and the Dominican Republic. Their sexual relations with prostitutes become part and parcel of learning about the ‘real culture’, promoting racial harmony and reversing fears about ‘race’ conflict. While in their own countries they feel unable to approach Black men and women, when they travel they ‘get close’ to ‘Others’ and really bridge differences. A photographer from London complained that in London, “Coloured people keep to themselves,” and that Black girls “won’t go out” with him. However in Cuba his economic power meant that he was approached by Black people, something which he took to imply that in “Cuba there is no racism.”

It is not only anxieties about racialised power that are calmed, but also anxieties about gender. Sex tourists are also very resentful of women’s perceived power in the West. They fear Western women’s ability to reject their sexual advances and are alarmed by their demands for equality. A 37-year-old British market trader on holiday in Cuba argued that British women demand too much from men:

“It’s funny, but in England, the girls I fancy don’t fancy me and the ones that do fancy me, I don’t fancy. They tend to be sort of fatter and older, you know, 35, but their faces, they look 40. But in Cuba, really beautiful girls fancy me. They’re all over me. They treat me like a star. My girlfriend’s jet black, she’s beautiful. She’s a ballerina. She’s so fit it puts me to shame really. I don’t get much exercise... Women in England want too much nowadays... I’m a market trader, but I’ve done quite well for myself. I bought a house on the Isle of Dogs before the property boom, and I made a lot of money on that. So I’m residing in Wimbledon now. But English girls, they want someone with a good job as well as money. They don’t want someone like me. They want a lawyer or a doctor or something, they want to move in the world, and I can’t blame them... Cuban girls don’t expect so much. If you take a Cuban girl out for dinner she’s grateful, whereas an English girl, she’s grateful but she wants more really.”

Prostitute women in the Hispanic Caribbean, by contrast, neither challenge nor demand anything very much from male sex tourists. Another sex tourist, a policeman from the US told me he liked going to the Dominican Republic because there he became a desirable object much in demand. “In the States,” he said, “There are men for every girl, here there are 20 girls for every man, and all of them eager to please.” A couple of Yorkshire miners also enthused about how the girls they



were had not only had sex with them, but also washed their feet on the beach, put sun tan lotion on their backs, cleaned their rooms and fought over them, all for a mere \$US25.

Having conducted interview research with male workers in Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Venezuela in August 1997, I conducted preliminary research on female sex tourism in Negril, Jamaica. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 45 individuals involved in the informal sex industry and female sex tourists. Data was also gathered from a questionnaire administered to an opportunistic sample of 86 tourists. The survey found that almost half of single women had entered into one or more sexual relationship with Jamaican men while holiday. Although this was a non-random sample, generalisations cannot be advanced on the basis of it, what one can conclude is that some women travel for sex in much the same way that some men do.

Moreover, it seems that female sex tourists are similar to male sex tourists in terms of their attitudes and motivations and the narratives they use to justify their behavior. Just as male sex tourism can be understood as an attempt to affirm a given racialised and gendered identity, so female sex tourism appears to reflect a concern to reverse and restore a particular order and to ensure their own position and power within that order.

Women have traditionally used travelling as a way of masculinising their identities rather than as a way of affirming their femininity. Today, some female sex tourists are travelling in order to penetrate traditional male domains, claiming traditional male powers to reaffirm their femininity. It is important for many female sex tourists to affirm their sense of 'womanliness' by being sexually desired by men. Women who feel rejected by men in the West for being 'sort of fatter and older, you know, 35, but their faces, they look 40', find that in Jamaica all this is reversed. Here they are chased and 'romanced', sweet talked and 'loved' by men and once again find that they exist as sexual objects. Sex tourism allows some Western women to sexualise their bodies in ways that would be difficult to achieve back home and to be desired by highly desirable men. When asked to describe 'boyfriends' in the questionnaire most of the female sex tourists emphasised how for them Black Jamaican men possessed bodies of great sexual value. One woman described her

According to Senior Cuban health officials since the end of 1996 there has been a rise of about 60 percent in the rate of people being infected with HIV virus. A growing risk is the rise in the number of foreign visitors from countries with a higher rate of AIDS than Cuba. It appears that some tourists go to Cuba in part for sex despite the fact that President Fidel Castro's government says this is not the sort of tourism Cuba wants.

Reuter Information Service

lover as 'sweet, friendly, gorgeous-great body', and another as 'Handsome, physically fit, 27-year old, honest, proud, serious, family man, excellent lover'. Black bodies become commodities which allow affluent Western women (both Black and white women) to experience an sexual, gendered, racialised and age boundaries. Where at home they would be stigmatised for having legitimate or casual relations with Black men, younger men, 'womanisers' or for having many sexual partners, in holiday resorts such as Negril they are permitted to 'consume' the Black male, the younger boy, the playboy or as many men as they desire while maintaining their honour and reputation back home. Their sense of racialised superiority in Caribbean countries, together with their economic



power also puts them on a level with white men and for once they can experience feeling more powerful than a man.

At a theoretical level, the most interesting feature of sex tourism is alternative form of embodied power. In this case they are allowed to be in control of masculinities which are 'Black', 'hypersexual' and 'dangerous'. This type of female sex tourist does not want to establish a loving relationship with a Jamaican man and take him back to meet her parents nor does she challenge racism back notion of a racial hierarchy and welcome their position in it. Tourist destinations become a safe environment within which female sex tourists can enact control over a masculinity which is imagined stereotypically as aggressive and violent.

Even Western women who live up to Western ideals of beauty participate in sex tourism because they can use their greater economic power and/or racialised identities to exercise control over the relationships into which they enter with Jamaican men. One Jamaican in his 20s who sold tour boat rides to tourists and also approached tourist women for 'friendships' told me of one relationship he had with an older, attractive white American divorcee in her 40s: "Well, she tell me straight up front she start that she have three kids and she don't want to get involved. We could do this, we could do that. She don't want no personal relationship. One day, you don't hear from me, things happen, you must take it just like that because it's not a long term relationship, you know."

Such control means these women can limit the risk of being rejected or humiliated. As a Woman remarked about the end of one such relationship "I got more out of him than he got out of me." They can also transgress how local peoples' involvement rests on using their 'Blackness' as part of the commodity that they are selling. For along with the actual services, whether it be acting as a guide, fruit seller, artist, or gigolo/prostitute, they are selling part of their personal self.

So long as it remains acceptable to use 'difference' as the Caribbean's unique selling point, the tourist industry will continue to provide a framework which permits (even encourages) sex tourism. This in turn serves to entrench not only inequalities between the West and developing countries, but also the very forms of racism and sexism which structure patterns of exclusion and exploitation.

*(Edited from Sex Tourism in the Caribbean, Jacqueline Sanchez Taylor, University of Leicester
A chapter in Tourism, Travel and Sex, Eds. Stephen Clift and Simon Carter, Cassell, 1999)*

100 women forced to become devadasis **EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE, Bangalore, Jan 18:**

Over 100 women were forced to become devadasis at Thondihala village in Raichur district on Saturday night. Of these 50 women were paraded in a semi-nude state - flouting restrictions imposed by the district administration.

The administration had banned the ritual, but the nightlong practice of animal slaughter, accompanied by the nude parade, ran its full course unchecked, during the Huligemma Jatra'. According to reports, the women were paraded till the wee hours and 'converted' into devadasis at discreet hideouts.

Many youth fora activists, who had camped in this hamlet a fortnight ago to launch an awareness against the ritual, feel let down by the failure of the police and district administration to halt the barbaric practice.



The activists had staged street plays and distributed pamphlets in their crusade. However, the 'devotees' (read customers) had already made arrangements to beat the system.

Members of various fora who were tipped off, rushed to the spots, only to have a fleeting glimpse of women being whisked to unknown destinations.

At other places, the rituals were already over, leaving behind telltale stories of yet another woman having been forced into the trade.

The police, when contacted admitted that the parade had taken place, but denied report that more than 100 women were forced into becoming devadasis.

SEX in the Sand

*The Rajasthan desert in northern India is an unarguably dramatic and romantic place. Local camel drivers take female tourists on treks in the desert and holiday romances under the stars are commonplace. But the darker side of such dreamy encounters is HIV and AIDS. Around one in every 100 Indians have HIV/AIDS countrywide and India has one of the highest growth rates of AIDS in the world **Lizz Daniels** travelled to Rajasthan and was devastated by the ignorance of both locals and tourists to the issues. Her answer was to set up a puppet show which provides sex education through entertainment.*

Tourism is India's third biggest foreign exchange earner and much of the population survive on the tourist trade. Over the last 30 years this tourist-oriented culture has grown completely out of proportion as the influx of 'First World' travellers has increased. Whether budget travellers or luxury tourists, they have access to large amounts of cash compared to the local population. Many problems have consequently arisen amongst the local communities based around who has, who has not, and who wants.

Tourists are generally seen as either 'walking money belts' (and therefore an immediate means to acquiring food and/or material possessions) or 'a possible lay' (and perhaps a long-term view to 'freedom').

As tourism increases, there is more contact with Westerners and an increasing desire to know and have more. The dream of many young Indian men involved in tourism is to meet a white woman who will rescue him from his prison of caste culture and poverty. This is happening all over India, and as an older white woman travelling alone I am constantly surrounded by handsome young Indian men who see me as the possible means to an end. Often I am unable to walk alone without being accosted by some man or other who is desperate to get closer. But then it is after all, the tourists who over the years of dispensing our wealth and making demands of locals ranging from subservience to sex have taught the Indians what to do.

It is easy to get lost in a romantic view of Rajasthan, enticed by the magnificent turbans worn by proud Rajasthani men and swayed by the lure of the desert. For what could be more inviting than to spend two or three days on camel safari carried through the wide open wilderness, sleeping



under starry skies and being sung traditional love songs. One can easily slip into a dream world transported into another time, another place. For us it's temporary dream releasing us from our humdrum lives. But for the camel driver it's something different. It's his livelihood.

It is not my place to judge or criticise, but the consequence of this scenario go beyond the tourist having a holiday romance and the camel driver earning a living, the consequence can be death. Sexual awareness of any kind is very limited amongst the camel drivers and any awareness amongst tourists that may influence their actions at home is often lost. Holidays are a time for hedonism, as we all know. And caution is thrown to the desert wind.

So what to do? This is India and people are desperate. How to bring about a greater awareness? How to educate this vast population of young men who have missed out on school because the lure of tourism and the need for money held great immediate profits. The way I dealt with the dilemmas I saw was to return England and create a puppet show story and then take it back to Rajasthan. By fate I stumbled across the Social Work and Resource Centre in Tilonia, an alternative people-power organisation created by Bunker Roy in the early '70s. I met with the communication section who use puppetry as medium for creating change and I have made some valuable long-lasting connections. I am delighted to be able to have their input and support.

A large cloth puppet of a turbaned Rajasthani man and woman traveller wearing Indian print trousers, money belts and carrying the 'Lonely Planet Guide to Love', are the stars of one of my shows. I am starting with environmental issues - the desert is also suffering under the strain of jeep safaris - and I will move on to sex education as I gain confidence and experience. The stories I perform are vibrant and imaginative and have been well received by my tourist and Indian audiences. I'm really putting energy into creating changes. I believe that something has to be done and I'm doing something - or trying to at least. The Indians think I'm crazy - perhaps I am!

Women for sale in South Rajasthan
The Hindu, TONK (Rajasthan), 9.12.98

Strange though it may sound, an abhorrent practice of selling young women is still in vogue among a few communities in the villages of south Rajasthan. The good pace of rural development and progress on the education front has apparently not been able to stall the march of social impediments in this part of the State.

Known as 'Nata', this social evil is a way of 'life -being practiced for long - among the Meena, Gujjar and Bairwa tribes and a section of Jat'. Having converted the women into virtual commodities, this practice may match the brutality of the recently reported auction of women for prostitution in Iluru district of Andhra Pradesh.

'Nata', in its original form, was the marriage of a widow with the brother of her deceased husband. This was done with the intention of providing her security against the vagaries of life and protecting the children. However, what has evolved over a period of time is not only the distortion of the original concept but also a slur on morality.

The 'despicable practice involves sale of a married woman by her father to a third person for a price, which ranges anywhere from Rs. 10,000 to 50,000, even though the wedlock continues. The second "alliance" does not entail observance of any ritual and the woman is compelled to live with her buyer. The matter does not end here. The husband of the woman sold off - being an aggrieved party has to approach the buyer, not for taking his wife back, but for reaching an agreement in which he is paid "jhagra" - a price mutually agreed upon. The matter is generally settled by the village panchayats.



Since these affairs have social acceptability and disputes, if any, are referred to the village panchayats, the police can hardly play any role in stopping this ugly practice. The Superintendent of Police, Mr. Madan Lal Dahiya, told this correspondent that the police only intervene when the father of the woman who is sold off files a complaint alleging abduction.

Upon investigations, all such complaints are found false as they are in the first place made to mislead the husband. In the 'Nata' cases, the police normally produces the woman in question in court to record her statements in which under peer pressure she expresses her desire to live with the buyer, Mr. Dahiya says.

As much as 80 per cent of the abduction cases in the district pertain to 'Nata', the S.P. said. Since 1996, when 73 abduction cases were registered with the police, they have exhibited an upward trend, with 74 in 1997 and 80 so far in the current year. However, there are no reports of organised gangs indulging in this practice.

Besides Tonk, this social evil is prevalent in the villages of Sawal Madhopur and parts of Kota and Baran districts. According to locals, at times when the entire family of the woman's husband goes to the buyer's village and a panchayat is called to decide the issue, the scene resembles a mini-fair. Over the past few months, such panchayats have been organised in Sawantgarh, Jalsita, Thadoli, Dalwasa and Benpa villages.

The entire expense of the panchayat, including that on liquor food, is borne by the buyer. The Deputy Superintendent of Police of Uniarra tehsil, M. Dev Karan, states that the men of some tribes often "purchase" a woman in this manner either to enhance their social status or when they get money after a good harvest.

In the entire transaction, every party - including the woman's father, husband and panchayat members - try to mint money, while there is always the poor woman, who is sold off like a commodity. It is indeed shocking that even 50 years after Independence, such crimes against humanity continue to hold sway in areas where development and education have otherwise led to progress.

That the 'Nata' cases are never reported to social welfare authorities is a pointer to a deeper malaise in rural societies. The Tonk Social Welfare Officer, Mr. N.R. Abhay, admits that the abolition of this practice is nowhere on the Government's agenda. 'Nata' is resorted to because women are fewer in number than men in certain castes, according to him.

With neither the Government nor the Non Government Organisations (NGOs) willing to take an initiative to bring about the much-needed reform, women continue to be the silent sufferers in this social structure formulated by men for their own advantage.

Mahabalipuram's street walkers asked to scoot

Vikram K, The Indian Express 9.10.1997

Mahabalipuram, one of the two World Heritage Centres in Tamil Nadu, is trying hard to rebuild its image and wipe out the recent past sullied by reports of prostitution rackets involving children. As the shore temple spruces up to receive Queen Elizabeth II in the middle of October, authorities have clamped down on the flourishing flesh trade and all the identified brothels have closed. People involved in such rackets have left the town, claims Mahabalipuram Special Grade Town Panchayat Chairman E. Sathya. "They were outsiders and have been told to close shop or move." Children repeatedly tailing foreign and domestic tourists are warned by the local youth. Voluntary organisations are keeping a strict vigil to guard against child prostitution.

According to Chengalpattu MGR Range DIG G Nanjil Kumaran: "Prostitution may not be totally out but we have been successful to a substantial extent in curbing the menace." He said lodges are being raided on suspicion or whenever allegations arise.

Mahabalipuram is now looking for more funds to improve resorts, power and water supply so that it can measure up to being a world tourist centre. Danish tourist in the town gushed up about how clean



Mahabalipuram is. For them it is cleaner than what Chennai is. The town is well kept, with garbage bins dotting the side of the roads except at the bus stand and it's neighbourhood.

POOR FACILITIES: The Panchayat Chief Sathya however complained that the government is neglecting Mahabalipuram. This town has historical significance and the funds allotted to us are just the same as allotted to other towns which do not earn as much revenue as we do. We deserve more," he said. The reason for the disappointment probably stems from the promises not being honoured once the local body elections were over. The provision of water taps in every house was among the first of the many proposals. Despite official teams coming for inspections several times, funds for this project have not been allocated. The temple town has also asked for a fire station, keeping in mind the safety of hotels, lodges and tourists accommodations. Most shocking is the poor medical facilities; though this coastal town has only 7,000 people (stable population), the only resemblance to a hospital is a shoddy Primary Health Centre. The nearest hospital is in Chengalputtu and in emergencies, such as accidents, victims have no immediate relief. Nor does this tourist town have a proper school, though land has been set apart for both the hospital and the school. "But nothing is taking off," local people said. The local body has been given Rs 60 lakh for expediting works. Laying of concrete roads in eight areas in the interior of the town has since commenced. Seasonal unemployment a bane of tourist towns has Mahabalipuram frozen for a long period of time.

Luring them Young into the Ring

Gita Aravamudan, Times Of India - Bangalore, 6.6.1998

Grinding poverty and illiteracy are the twin curses that result in many girls being trapped in flesh trade.

Bangalore is one of the five major cities, which supplies 80 per cent of the child prostitutes in the country, according to a study published by the National Commission for Women last year. When the Karnataka State Commission for Women tried to investigate this further, it stumbled upon a major smuggling ring whereby girls from impoverished rural families were lured to Goa and pushed into the flesh trade.

To be born poor is bad. To be born as a girl into a poor family is worse. And to be born as the daughter of a poor alcoholic father or unwed mother is about the worst you can get. The eyes of the little girls and teenage women with babies on their hips who come rushing with their palms outstretched at the traffic lights, tell tales of their own.

Shanti, the 14-year-old daughter of a single mother was walking down a road in a fairly crowded locality to buy ration sugar for the household in which she was employed. An autorickshaw stopped near her and a young man leaned out as if he was asking her for directions. Before she knew it she was whisked away. She managed to bite the hand of her abductor and escape. She later learnt that it was her drunken father, who had abandoned the family, who was responsible. He had "sold" her and told the abductors where she could be found.

Village girls face a different kind of problem due to ignorance combined with grinding poverty. The case of the girl servant missing from a bank official's house in Bangalore highlights this issue. Touts who go to villages are able to convince parents that their daughters will be well looked after if they are sent to work as domestic servants with rich families in the city. Often the agent is a distant relative or acquaintance. The illiterate parents cannot find out how they are being treated in the city.

The girls themselves are in a similar situation and have no one they can turn to even if they are being physically abused or sexually exploited. The agent seldom gives the family an address. "If you go and bother them, your daughter will lose her job," they are told. "Actually, there are some cases where the girls are looked after well and come back to the village with some money and jewellery and are able to get married," says Devamma who has brought her niece from her village near Kunigal and placed her in the house of a school teacher. "But, they need some interested person here to look after them. I go and see my niece every week. If they ill-treat her, I will take her out and put her in another house. Neither Devamma nor the educated employers of her niece seem to worry about the fact that the child servant is just 10 years old and ought to be in school.



Of course, there are many who never come back. The agents have well organised rings. "They are working with the girls from the same area, who are able to lure their former friends by painting glorious pictures of the lives they lead in the big city. Sometimes a big group of village girls is recruited to work in a garment factory or packaging unit. When the girls reach their destination they find they have been brought to work in brothels.

Every state has its own sordid tale to tell. Rajasthan tops the list with its double gang rape. In Kerala there was the famous ice-cream parlour which was being used to lure girls into prostitution. In another state it was a photo studio which was used for drugging college girls and photographing them in compromising positions so that they could be blackmailed into the flesh trade.

Girls below the age of 10 are bought from poor rural families in Nepal from and sold to the brothels in Mumbai. When they return infected with AIDS, no one wants to touch them. Certainly not their families.

In Karnataka, girls from city slums as well as from the Devadasi community are particularly vulnerable as the elders collude with agents to send them off to the red-light districts of Mumbai. The KSCW study showed that the teenagers from Karnataka were employed in Goa as street hawkers during the day and made to dance in bars and entertain men during the night.

I remember a similar study done in Kerala more than a decade ago where it was revealed that girls picked up from fish processing units were exported to coastal towns in Maharashtra where they were forced to shell fish during the day and sleep with men during the night.

Teenaged girls are preferred by many employers because they are physically strong, dexterous with their fingers, more patient, don't unionise easily and are not hassled by families and children. All exploitable qualities. And they have been exploited. By private match factories, by employers of domestic servants, by state-aided income-generating programmes, even by charitable institutions supported by missionary funds. The flesh trade agents only add a new dimension to this existing exploitation.

Protest launched against legalising prostitution

The Indian Express

Eighteen-year-old Rita Biswas, who could have escaped from the clutches of flesh traders of Mumbai and their touts operating here, has staged a protest with a few more victims against "the demand for giving legal status to prostitution as a profession". Rita and 20 year old Jaheda Bibi and other victims, who gathered here today under the aegis of the Centre for Communication and Development (CCD), a women rights protection group, told reporters that giving legal status to prostitution would be like legalising women-trafficking". Later, Mumtaz Khatun, an activist and convenor of the CCD told the reporters that, a section of social activists and trade unions are carrying on the campaign to legalise prostitution either without realising its damaging impact on society and implications or trying to serve an unworthy cause". Swapan Mukherjee, the secretary of the CCD, disclosed that according to a study conducted recently "enough evidence has been gathered to prove that over 10,000 girls have already been sent to various brothels in the country from West Bengal during the last five years."

"Could those who advocated the legalisation of prostitution guarantee these helpless girls return and are rehabilitated," Mukherjee asked. The CCD, which has planned to hold a rally on August 19 and submitted a memorandum to West Bengal Chief Minister Jyoti Basu and Governor A R Kidwai, asked "politicians, trade unions working towards helping the prostitutes get a legal status," to desist from such 'thoughtless action'. Mukherjee said "the consequences of such a move would be disastrous as legal status would rob the victims of their last defence". Mukherjee says "in the event of prostitutes getting legal status, the political patronage that the touts get would come up openly and poverty would only serve as an excuse to push the targeted girls into prostitution."

Indian Express, 19.08.1998.



Time to legalise the oldest profession

C. Jayanthi, Times of India - Bangalore, 14.1.1998

Should prostitution be legalised? There is no escaping the fact that in a majority of cases, sex workers are victims of abuse, not to mention circumstances. But merely categorising prostitution as an evil which must be suppressed or as a crime that sullies the moral fabric of society - does little to help them.

The trafficking of women is no longer confined to one's national borders, It is an organised industry involving smuggling, abduction, deception and bondage of thousands of women and girl children across international frontiers. In this world of shrinking options, rampant unemployment, illiteracy, poverty and a subsistence level of existence, women and girl children become easy targets for recruiters who quite often lure women under the guise of marriage or the prospect of a lucrative job.

No Legal Protection

The statistics tell their own story. According to estimates by NGOs some 5,000 women and girls from Nepal are lured into the trade in India every year. A recent SAARC report says that on an average, about 4,500 women and children are smuggled into Pakistan from Bangladesh. These recruits have no legal protection, and are kept under sub-human conditions and are victims of what might be termed modern-day slavery. A Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association report mentions that traffickers also use India and Pakistan to route victims to West Asia. Tourism too has contributed in a large way to the sex industry. Newspaper reports and independent studies by NGOs and the UN suggest that South-East Asian countries have attracted tourists from the West due to this thriving industry.

Victims of prostitution quite often become pawns in the hands of middleman. The increasing globalisation of the economy and a rapidly spreading consumer culture have resulted in a large number of people being denied their traditional modes of subsistence. It has also resulted in many being excluded from the development process. A high percentage of the resultant newly poor comprises women, especially in South and South-east Asia. Ironically, in the model of "outward oriented" development, women too have become items of export. Trafficked women, even though they are victims of abuse, contribute to the economy of the countries they work in through their earnings.

Despite this, they are not protected by the legal system as their profession is classified as a crime almost everywhere, and although in most cases they are victims of a crime, they are considered perpetrators. Denial of their rights does not really help as in a majority of cases they are victims of a system.

Several NGOs who have worked with sex workers and sex workers rights groups believe that the entry of children and women into prostitution cannot be ended just with the help of the police. They contend that there is need to have a regulatory body to help change the situation. Isolation and stigmatisation of sex workers does not help as it increases their dependence on third parties and denies them access to legal and medical protection. Also, the lack of education and economic opportunities makes poorer women and girls more vulnerable and forces them into situations where they can be exploited.

Human Problem

There is thus a need to look at the issue as a human, social and economic problem rather than merely a "law and order" one. The law which in most countries regards trafficked women in, the sex industry as criminals - prevents many of them from seeking legal redressal, thereby making them vulnerable to exploitation. Fear of victimisation and social ostracism has prevented a majority of them from seeking counselling services. Organisations such as the National Commission for Women which have been involved in the rescue and rehabilitation of sex workers have complained that there is a lack of adequate state homes for rescued sex workers involved in cross-border trafficking. Rehabilitation also becomes tough due to the lack of social acceptance of these women.



In countries, where prostitution is legalised, sex workers undoubtedly enjoy better health, are more aware of sexually transmitted diseases and are able to take precautions to prevent the spread of these diseases. As they have recourse to legal redressal, they are less vulnerable and therefore less exploited. It is doubtful whether prostitution, considered the oldest profession known to humankind, can be eradicated from this planet. However, by granting commercial sex workers rights and preventing their abuse, we can reduce and at some point perhaps stop the entry of fresh recruits into the profession, thereby breaking the cycle of abuse.

Today we no longer say:
Give us more jobs, more rights,
consider us your “equal” or even
allow us to compete with you
better

But rather:
Let us re-examine the whole
question, all the questions. Let us
not only redefine ourselves, our
role, our image -but also the kind
of society we want to live in.

— *Women's Tribune Centre, New York*



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